

*Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.*

**I. N. A.  
SAGA**

**BY  
RAM SINGH RAWAL**

*New Literature*  
**ALLAHABAD.**









*Netaji surveying the Andamans,  
the first territory of  
Azad Hind.*



*Major General Shah Nawaz  
Commander Bose Brigade  
and Second Division.*



## PREFACE

Ever since my arrival in India at the end of December, 1945, I have been contributing articles to the press about the Azad Hind movement in East Asia, in which I had the good fortune of taking an active part ever since its very inception. My object has been to present before my countrymen the true picture of perhaps the most revolutionary phase in the struggle for India's Independence ever since 1857.

In the middle of this year, I had the honour of meeting Pandit Satyadeo Vidyalkar, the eminent Hindi author and journalist, who kindly suggested to me to compile my several articles into a book form. Realising the necessity of presenting an authentic version of our movement before the country. I gladly agreed to Pandit Vidyalkar's valuable suggestion. I collected my articles and added to them many more chapters. Hence the present volume.

It is a very brief account of the Azad Hind Movement in East Asia, about which volumes can be written. It throws light over the condition of Indians in East Asia before the outbreak of the East Asia war. It deals with the spontaneous upsurge of a freedom movement soon after the war broke out. It describes how Indians in

East Asia gathered under the Tricolour standard of India's freedom and organised themselves into one vast and tremendous organisation. It reveals how the late Sri Rash Behari Bose's work was continued by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, the dynamic leader of our country, who infused a new spirit into the three million Indians in East Asia. Last but not the least, this volume describes the tremendous sacrifices undergone by the Gwalas and labourers, the businessmen and other Indians, residing in East Asia.

I have to particularly mention the first chapter of my book which besides dealing with situation in Thailand and Burma just before and after the Japanese surrender, also contains a short account of my adventurous journey from Bangkok to Imphal during November-December 1945, which I covered alongwith three of my comrades. One of them is my most intimate and closest comrade, Sri P. Somasundaram a brave hero and a young man of strong convictions. I take this opportunity in expressing my heartfelt thanks to three of my sincere co-workers and comrades.

I am very grateful to Major-General Shah Nawaz Khan, who has very kindly written the Foreword to my book. Words are too weak an expression for recording my thanks to General Saheb, who inspite of his pre-occupations and heavy responsibilities upon his shoulders, kindly went through my book and has written the Foreword.

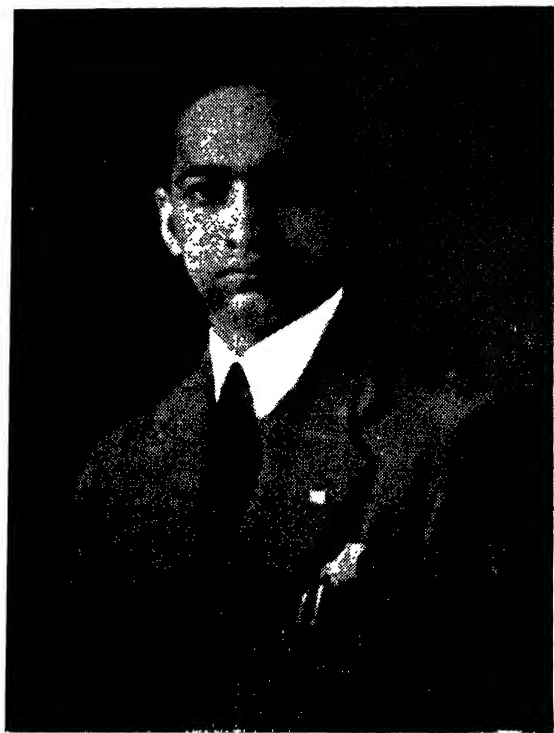
My thanks are also due to Shri K. S. Rawat. of the Azad Hind Dal, who rendered me invaluable help in giving me necessary suggestions.

In the end I would say that I have recorded facts about the historical movement of Azad Hind, as I witnessed them and knew them. There may be many mistakes, and they are all mine

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Ramsingh Rawal.

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*The Author*  
*(In Japan)*

## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

25 years old, Sardar Ram Singh Rawal was born in 1921 at Sohdra, a village in the District of Gujranwala (Punjab) of a very noble Rajput family, to the late Lala Sohan Lal Rawal, a leading personality in that area. The young Rawal passed his Matriculation examination from the Hindu High School, Wazirabad, in 1937. He was all along a scholarship holder. His father died while Ram Singh was studying in the Matriculation. Hence he could not proceed with his studies.

In 1938-39, Sardar Rawal organised the village Congress Committee and became its first Secretary. The problem of employment, however, forced him to leave the Secretaryship and proceed overseas. He left for Thailand in August 1939, and reached there in September 1939. There he secured a clerk's job in a firm, which had its branch office in Kobe, Japan. He was soon asked to proceed to Japan, as one of their clerks there. Leaving Bangkok in October of the same year Sardar Rawal reached Kobe in November. Within a few months, the hardworking and industrious young man was made the Assistant Manager and then the Manager of the Kobe branch of the firm. In the history of Indians in Japan, Ram Singh Rawal was perhaps the first youngest Indian to become the Manager of a branch office of an Indian concern.

In 1940, Sardar Rawal helped in organising the Indo-Thai Society and was its Secretary for some time. He came into contact with Sri Anandmohan Sahay and the late Sri Rash Behari Bose, and in 1940 became the Secretary of the Indian National Association of Japan, of which Sahay was the President. A prominent member of the India Club, Bharat Mandir and other organisations of Kobe, Sardar Rawal always took an outstanding part in all the activities of the Indian community in Kobe. He



was also one of the leading figures in arranging receptions to India's leading personalities like Shrimati Kamladevi Chattopadhyaya, Sri Amritlal, D. Seth and others who visited Japan. He also had close contacts with the leading Japanese officials and non-officials.

At the end of 1941, Ram Singh Rawal went to Shanghai. After the East Asia War broke out, he assisted Mr. Sahay and the late Sri D. S. Deshpande in organising the Indian community there. In April 1942, he went back to Japan and in May 1942, left Japan as one of the eleven delegates of Indians in Japan and Manchukuo to attend the Bangkok Conference, which was held on 15th June 1942. During the Bangkok Conference Sardar Rawal was a popular delegate. Afterwards he was appointed a Private Secretary to the late Sri Rash Behari Bose.

After the establishment of the Headquarters of the Indian Independence League in Bangkok, Sardar Rawal was attached to the Publications Department. After Netaji's arrival, Sardar Rawal was appointed Assistant Secretary to the Department of Publicity, Press and Propaganda, I. I. L. Thailand Territorial Committee, Bangkok. He worked under young men like Dr. P. N. Sharma and Mr. K. N. Hakimji. Dr. Sharma is the person who organised Indians in Hongkong, and who later on very successfully organised the Azad Hind Radio and the Azad Hind papers in Bangkok. Dr. Sharma was later appointed as Acting General Secretary and Social and Welfare Secretary of the I. I. L. Thailand. In the beginning of 1945, Ramsingh Rawal was appointed the Secretary of the Department and also the Editor of the daily *Azad Hind*.

After the "Rangoon Retreat", when the Headquarters of the A. H. Government were shifted to Bangkok, Sardar Rawal was concurrently appointed a Secretary to the Department of P. P. P. in the Headquarters.

After the Japanese surrender, Sardar Rawal along with his comrades became the victim of the British P. S. S. He remained here till 1st November, the day when accompanied by two of his comrades he escaped to India on foot. He reached Imphal after covering a distance of 3,000 miles on 19th December 1945.

Soon after his arrival in India, he volunteered himself to work in the All India, I. N. A. Enquiry and Relief Committee Central Office, Delhi. He worked there for about nine months as incharge of the Department of Publicity and Propaganda.

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## CONTENTS.

| CHAPTER | PARTICULARS   | PAGE  |
|---------|---|-------|
|         | Publisher's Note ... ..   | I—III |
| I.      | From Bangkok to Imphal ...  | 1     |
| II.     | Indians in Pre-War East Asia ...  | 63    |
| III.    | East Asia War and Spontaneous Upsurge<br>of Indian Freedom Movement ... | 92    |
| IV.     | From Tokyo to Bangkok ...   | 108   |
| V.      | Indian Independence League ...  | 125   |
| VI.     | New Leader (Netaji) and the New Life ...                                | 139   |
| VII.    | Azad Hind Organization in Europe ...                                    | 147   |
| VIII.   | Netaji's Whirlwind Tours and Re-<br>organisation ... ..                 | 151   |
| IX.     | Flag of Freedom over the Free India<br>Territories ... ..               | 186   |
| X.      | The First Offensive of the Azad Hind<br>Fauj ... ..                     | 193   |
| XI.     | Netaji and Achievements of Azad Hind                                    | 210   |

## **Appendix 1.**

|                | PAGE    |
|----------------|---------|
| Enrolment Form | ... 222 |

## **Appendix 2.**

|                  |         |
|------------------|---------|
| Recruit's Pledge | ... 223 |
|------------------|---------|

## **Appendix 3.**

|                                      |         |
|--------------------------------------|---------|
| Proclamation of Azad Hind Government | ... 224 |
|--------------------------------------|---------|

## **Appendix 4.**

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| Netaji's Oath and echo and re-echo of<br>cheers | ... 226 |
|---|---------|

## **Appendix 5.**

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| Oath of Members of Provisional Government<br>of Azad Hind | ... 227 |
|---|---------|

## **Appendix 6.**

|                          |         |
|--------------------------|---------|
| Special Order of the Day | ... 227 |
|--------------------------|---------|

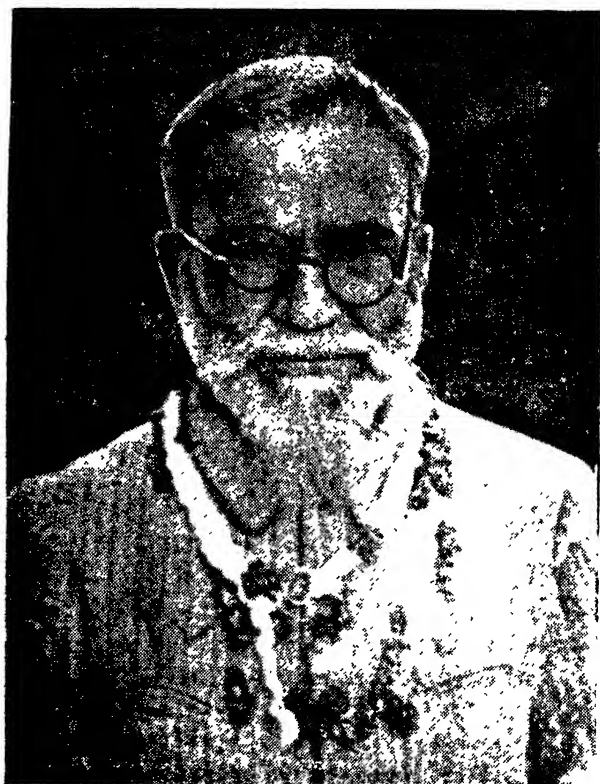
## **Appendix 7.**

|                         |         |
|-------------------------|---------|
| All Roads Lead to Delhi | ... 229 |
|-------------------------|---------|









***Raja Mahendra Pratap  
Brave Patriot and Patriotic Exile  
for many years.***

## CHAPTER I

### From Bangkok To Imphal

Imphal, which was the target of our brave warriors of the Azad Hind Fauj, is the capital of the State of Manipur. It lies 74 miles from the eastern borders of India. It was Imphal which was besieged by the columns of the I. N. A., who fought valiantly against heavy odds. It was Imphal where the fate of the British Empire was hanging in the balance during the summer of 1944. And it was Imphal from where our freedom fighters had to retreat, and it was the same Imphal where I and my three other comrades reached at the end of December last long after the Japanese had surrendered. We reached there after covering an adventurous distance of about 3000 miles, and it took us well nigh 2 months from Bangkok to Imphal.

In this chapter I intend to narrate the story of my adventure. But before I launch upon penning down my story, I would like to state the condition of our movement in particular, and Indians in general in Thailand, just before and after the surrender of the Japanese.

#### **Last Year—Just Before the British Arrival in Bangkok**

The atomic bombardment of Japan's two cities — Hiroshima and Nagasaki — during the month of August last year, and Japan's unfavour-

able position on the various theatres of war left no doubt as to the eventual fall of Japan. Hence Japan's unconditional surrender on the 11th of August did not come as a surprise to those who were in the know of things. It however—as far as Indians were concerned — did not affect the functioning of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and its auxiliary organisations. The Headquarters of the three organisations — Azad Hind Government, Azad Hind Fauj, and Azad Hind League—were at that time at Bangkok, the Capital of Thailand. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was at that time reported to be in Singapore. Shri Parmanand, Minister of Supplies of the Azad Hind Government and Vice President of the Azad Hind League, East Asia, was the Officer-in-Charge of the Government as well as the League. Besides Shri Parmanand, there were a few more Ministers including Sardar Ishar Singh, Chairman of the I. I. L. Thailand, in Bangkok.

Japan had surrendered but it did not affect the policy of Indians. And as far as the morale of Indians was concerned it was rather strengthened. From every section of the free Indian organisation, it could be gathered, Japan had surrendered, but not the Azad Hind.

On the 17th of August, Indians in Bangkok learnt that their Netaji was in Bangkok the previous evening and had left that very morning for an unknown destination. A special Order of the Day bearing Netaji's signatures was issued by the Department of Publicity and Propaganda of the Azad Hind League Thailand. In that Order

of the Day Netaji stated that India's struggle did not begin with Japan's East Asia War and neither did it end with Japan's surrender. An historic phase of India's struggle had come to an end due to the enemy's superiority in arms. Indians were to carry on their struggle.

After Netaji's departure the work of the Indian Independence League continued. The atmosphere was tense. The Thai people were a bit confused. They were awaiting the arrival of the British troops. The Japanese were being disarmed. Some cases of Harakiri on the part of some of the Japanese generals were being reported. Amidst this confusion and tense situation, the monthly celebration of the Azad Hind Day was as usual observed on the 21st of August, with Indians—irrespective of caste, creed and religion—attending in full. The speakers stressed upon the significance of the struggle which Indians in East Asia had carried on against heavy odds. They further expressed their determination to continue the freedom fight under all circumstances.

Then came the fateful day of the 23rd of August. The Domei News Agency reported that the aeroplane carrying Netaji and his comrades had met with a fatal accident near Taihoku Formosa. It further stated that it had resulted in the death of Netaji and a few Japanese officers, and that Col. Habib-ul-Rahman had been wounded. It was very hard to believe. When the same news was broadcasted over the Tokyo Radio, as well as over many allied Radios including Delhi, London, San Francisco, Indians had no other go

but to believe this shocking news. They received this news as they would have received the news of the death of their very dear and near one. Every body was in condolence. Not only Indians but also the Siamese, Chinese, Japanese and other nationals residing there felt aggrieved at the loss of India's dynamic leader. Indian men, women and children were seen weeping and crying when they first got this unpleasant news.

On the 24th of August—a meeting of the Indian community in Thailand was held at the premises of the Head Quarters of the Indian Independence League. A big portrait of the beloved Netaji with wreaths around it could be seen in the hall. On the face of every Indian—man, woman and child—present there a deep sign of mourning was visible. They had come there to pay their last homage to the image of their Leader, who to them was no more. Units of the Azad Hind Fauj in Bangkok, armed with their respective weapons were also there. Besides, representatives of the Siamese Government, Japanese Generals, Ambassadors of Japan, Germany and other Allied nations stationed at Bangkok had also come there to lay wreaths and pay homage to Free India's Leader. It started raining, meanwhile, and that also heavily. The units of the Azad Hind Fauj, notwithstanding rains, arrayed in lines. The reveillie was played, and full dress salute was offered to the departed Head of the State of Azad Hind, and the Supreme Commander of the Azad Hind Fauj. Then followed a silence for two minutes in honour of the departed soul. After that the Chairman of the Indian

Independence League, Thailand spoke a few touching words. It created an emotional atmosphere and brought tears in the eyes of many among the audience.

That was on the 24th of August. The British occupation troops or their envoys were yet to arrive. In another two days various news started pouring in regarding the death of Netaji. Rumours started circulating that the reported plane crash and Netaji's death was as usual just a camouflage. And last but not the least these rumours within few days got deep into the hearts of Indians. The stage came when no Indian would tolerate listening in to anybody that Netaji was dead.

At that time the Azad Hind Sangh was functioning as usual. There were about 200 workers working under the Thailand Territorial Committee, about 60 workers in the Headquarters and 20 to 25 workers in the Azad Hind Government Headquarters. These workers included Sardar Ishar Singh, Shri Parmanand, Shri A. N. Sircar, Revenue Minister, Shri J. A. Thivy, Secretary to the Government with Ministerial rank, Shri Karim Ghani, Acting Minister of Manpower, Shri D. M. Khan and Shri Debnath Das, Advisors to the A. H. Sangh as well as the A. H. Government. Among these persons, Shri A. N. Sircar and Shri J. A. Thivy had left for Malaya, prior to the arrival of Netaji from Singapore, while Shri Debnath Das accompanied Netaji on the 17th.

### **The British Occupation Forces Arrive**

The representatives of the British Govern-

ment arrived in Bangkok sometime about the 29th of August. They included Col. Shivdat Singh and Major Brown. As soon as they arrived they made the Thai Government declare that the workers and members of Azad Hind (meaning the A. H. Government as well as the A. H. Sangh) would be considered as enemy nationals. Apart from that another declaration was made that the following persons were "individual enemies of the United Nations".

1. Shri Paramanand.

2. Pt. Raghunath Sharma (Finance Secretary of the Thailand Territorial Committee, and the second most important man in Thailand.)

3. Shri Karim Gani.

4. Shri D. M. Khan, and

5. Shri Sen Gupta (Secretary to the Revenue Minister.)

Strangely enough, the name of Sardar Ishar Singh, who was the man behind all the League activities in Thailand was not included in the list. But at the same time a Thai Police guard was stationed at his house and he was confined in his own residence, on the 30th of August itself, whereas the proclaimed "enemies of the United Nations" were left free till the 3rd of September. Another person whose movements were restricted on the 30th of August itself, was Shri B. Prasad, who had been the Chairman of the Burma Territorial Committee of the A. H. Sangh for about 18 months after its formation there. A police guard was posted at his residence too.

## FROM BANGKOK TO IMPHAL

On 31st August, Col. Shivdatt Singh came to the A. H. Government office and conducted negotiations with Shri Paramanand, who was the Chief of the Sangh and the Government at that time. General J. K. Bhonsle also took part in the discussions. Meanwhile, news of the proposed arrival of Col. Shivdatt Singh had spread and a huge crowd of Indians had thronged in the premises of the A. H. Government office where the negotiations were going on. After the negotiations concluded, Shri Paramanand addressed the anxiously awaiting gathering, and stated that Col. Shivdatt Singh had given them definite assurance that the British Government would not interfere in the League activities and the League would be allowed to function as before. At the same time Col. S. Singh requested the League representatives to give him the guarantee that neither the League workers, nor the Indian public would interfere in the activities of the British Indian troops, or try to influence them. This announcement was received by the audience with a thundering ovation. Col. Shivdatt Singh struggled to make his way through the enthusiastic crowd which greeted him with the slogans " Jai Hind " etc.

Shri Paramanand, believing in the assurance given by Col. S. Singh, issued two messages, one to the Indian public and the other to the workers of the League and the Government in which he asked them not to lose hope on account of their temporary defeat but to continue their efforts for the achievement of India's freedom. Shri Paramanand also made it clear that in the absence



of Netaji's leadership, the Indians in East Asia should follow the lead of the Indian National Congress. He also expressed his hope that India would be free very soon. The result was, that the cyclostyle machine and other printing materials of the Publicity Department were immediately confiscated and the offices of the A. H. Sangh, A. H. Government and the Publicity Department were sealed and Thai police guards were posted there. Within a short period all the furniture and other things, including the various publications of the Publicity Department were removed. An amount of Tress 100,000 which was on the Sangh's safe, was also reported to have been confiscated. The National tri-colour, which was flying in all the League and Government offices, was pulled down, and the portraits of Netaji were removed from there.

In the meantime, members of the F. S. S. (field security service) also arrived. These included two Indian police officers, Mr. Dey, Inspector of Bengal Police and Mr. Nagina Singh, Sub-Inspector of the Punjab Police. They were headed by Col. Fenny, an Englishman. As soon as they arrived, all the Ministers and Advisors of the A. H. Government were put into prison. The arrests continued vigorously and more than 35 persons were imprisoned within a fortnight. The process was not complete when I left Bangkok on the 2nd of November, although some of those who were arrested had been released. So far as I recollect, the following are the prominent persons who were arrested:—

1. Sardar Ishar Singh.

2. Shri Parmanand.
3. „ Karim Ghani.
4. „ D. N. Khan.
5. „ B. Prasad.
6. „ Sen Gupta (Released afterwards)
7. „ Pandit Raghunath Sharma.
8. „ Dr. P. Sharma (Ex-Secretary Publicity Department acting General Secretary and Secretary Social Welfare Department.
9. Shri Harbans Lal.
10. Maulvi Ali Akbar.
11. Shri B. A. Kapassi.
12. „ Maghar Singh.
13. „ Amar Singh,
14. „ J. D. Mehtani (released afterwards).
15. „ Narayan Menon ( do do )
16. „ A. K. Chatterjee ( do do )
17. „ Daljit Singh.
18. Seth Narayan Singh Narula (released afterwards.)

These people were headed into a shed, which resembled a stable more than a place where human beings lived. The lavatory was at the centre of the shed and the whole atmosphere was surcharged with abominable stink. The imprisoned personages were treated in no way better than ordinary criminals but for the fact that meals could be supplied to them from outside. This facility as well was later on denied to them. They were allowed to come out of their shed

only for half an hour in the evening. And this included the time allotted for bathing as well as interviewing visitors. The Thai police (who are usually cordial) were instructed to be more than cold to them. In the beginning, visitors were allowed to talk to the prisoners but afterwards even this was considered to be dangerous, and the visitors were not allowed to exchange even formal greetings.

Meanwhile, the F. S. S. was busy interrogating most of the workers of the A. H. Government and League. Almost all those who were questioned were adamant on their stand, and in order to intimidate them veiled threats of immediate arrest and so on were adopted. Col. Fenny behaved like a perfect bully. When these methods proved ineffective Fenny thought it better to give as much discomfort to these workers as possible. Little by little most of the furniture including bedsteads, mattress and other necessary articles were removed from the League Messes. Two Radio sets belonging to the Publicity Mess were also taken away. Besides, police guards were posted in all the Messes. The workers were told that they were virtual prisoners and they were not to leave Bangkok under any circumstances.

The F. S. S. activity did not stop there. A completely non-political institution like the Thai Bharat Cultural Lodge founded by the late Swami Satyanand Puri, and the Swami Satyanand Puri Library, organised by prominent Siamese and Indians after the death of Swamiji, were suddenly sealed and later photographs of Netaji

and books regarding the movement were removed from there. It is worth mentioning here that Prince Von Vaithiakon, who is a permanent advisor to the Thai Foreign Ministry, was (and is) the patron of this institution.

Meanwhile, the two worthy Indian officers of the F. S. S. were busy blackmailing the poor Indian merchants. There were several reports to the effect that the afore-mentioned officers were extracting money and material from Indian merchants through illegal methods.

In the meantime, a mysterious military gang, consisting of White men and some others were perpetrating such unimaginable crimes on the defenceless Indians, as was never heard of anywhere else. The houses of rich Indians were raided and looted by armed gangs of military men. It is worth noting that almost all the victims of this atrocity were those who had been active League workers. To give an instance, the house of Pt. Raghunath Sharma was suddenly raided at night (at about 9 p. m.) after he had been taken into custody. The gang which raided was reported to consist of White men and some Asiatics. They came in a British Military jeep which they left on the main road to avoid suspicion. Pt. Dyal Das, brother-in-law of Pt. Sharma, was showered with questions by the gangsters which were to the effect whether he was an active worker of the League. Then he was told that the house was to be searched. Since Pt. Sharm had been arrested Pt. Dyal Das thought that it was going to be a genuine search. But when the search began, armed troops were

posted all around the house and the members of the family including the ladies, were asked not to stir. About six steel trunks containing valuable articles such as cash money, jewelry and clothing worth more than Tes. 50,000 were taken away. The only two male members in the house were then asked by the gang-chief to accompany him. On reaching the jeep, the gangsters forcibly removed a gold watch and a purse containing a big amount of cash from Shri Raja Rishi, the other male member with Pt. Dyal Das. Then the two poor men were pushed away and the jeep disappeared in the dark.

Pt. Dyal Das immediately reported to the British M. P. who took him to various offices. He was told in the end that some Australian officers and men were to leave by air the next day and he would be taken to the aerodrome, for finding out whether anyone of them was one of the looters. Accordingly he was taken next morning to the aerodrome, only to find that there was no body whom he could recognise. When the matter was reported to Col. Shivdatt Singh, who was 'protecting' the interests of the Indians there, he simply ignored it. This was but one among many instances like this.

Prominent Indians from Chumphorn (Southern Siam) and Chiangmai (Northern Siam) informed that in those places also the F. S. S. men were trying all means to intimidate the Indian merchants and to extract money and valuables from them as 'bribes for the Sahib'. Another activity of the F. S. S. men in Bangkok was to round up groups of individuals without any charge

and then release them after tedious and mischievous interrogation.

Now, the condition of the League workers in Bangkok was as a whole, very pitiable. They were definitely not in a position to earn their living. Thailand being a place where the official language is Thai, these people could not work as clerks or managers in any private firm. They would not like to work under the British, nor the latter would allow them to work under them. The only way open before them was to do some business of their own. But this required a fair amount of investment and business experience both of which most of the League workers lacked. The result was that they were rotting there, without anybody to take care of them. Almost all these men were long separated from their homes and they longed to be repatriated to India. Many are still there.

One more point should be made clear in this connection. The then Thai Government would have taken necessary measures for the repatriation of Indians but for the intervention of the British authorities. On the strength of our experience with the Thai officials both during the war and after, it can be declared that all the higher authorities of the Thai Government were and certainly are very sympathetic towards Indians and their cause. They realise the fact that only an independent and strong India will safeguard their political and economic interests from alien aggression. I stress upon this point that if they had their own course, the Thai Government would have taken immediate steps

for the relief and repatriation of all the helpless Indians.

### Azad Hind Fauj

The total number of the I. N. A. troops at Bangkok was about 2,000 at the time of the Japanese surrender. Some of the I. N. A. men from the civil were allowed to go back to civilian life while others, who were former residents of Indo-China and Malaya, were allowed to proceed to these places. The total strength which was exactly captured was over 1500 formerly belonging to I. A. and 388 former civilians.

It was said that Col. Shivdatt Singh was very arrogant and his behaviour with the officers and men of the A. H. F. was very insulting and aggravating. It was reliably learnt that Col. Singh even refused to address the officers including General Bhonsle with their A. H. F. ranks. But, however, he had to come down and show due regard to our officers as a result of the firm and united stand taken by the officers and men of our Army. We heard that after this Col. Singh tried to drive a wedge in the rank and file of our Army by showing seeming regard and leniency to the ex-British Indian Army men and by dividing the civilian volunteers in the A. H. F. Addressing the Azad Hind Fauj personnel in their camp Col. Singh was reported to have played this trick when he addressed the old Army men as his 'bretheren' and requested them to take off their A. H. F. ranks and put on their old British Military ranks. But none of the A. H. Fauj men was taken in by this vicious

game. On the other hand they were reported to have shouted down the tricky oration of the British colonel and refused to be disunited or made unfaithful to their cause and their Netaji. When efforts were made to distinguish the old Army men from the new recruits, they were foiled by the refusal of the old military men to give any details. But, however, Col. Shivdatt Singh managed to separate the civilian recruits from the old army men somehow or other. He told the former that they had been released and they could go. But the civilians refused to go out of their camps, and physical force had to be used to push them out of the camps.

But all these things did not make the encamped A. H. F. personnel lose their spirit of patriotism. They were still greeting one another with shouts of "Jai Hind" and the Qaumi Git was regularly sung in their camps. Meanwhile, the Indian civilians in Bangkok, mostly Gwalas from the U. P. were doing what all they could to help the imprisoned A. H. F. personnel. They were regularly supplying milk, vegetables and fruits to every A. H. F. camp in the city. When the camp commandant Major Brown saw this enthusiasm of the people he tried to curb it by refusing the civilians entry into the camps. But the resourceful Gwalas were not put down by this. They made friends with the Indian sentries and supply officers and continued 'smuggling' milk and other things into the A. H. F. camps. More than 14 Indian army personnel were arrested in this connection.

Another interesting thing, though slightly



irrelevant' to be mentioned in this connection is the unbounded enthusiasm and sympathy which the local Chinese Community in Bangkok showed towards India's cause. Never before such friendly relations prevailed between the Chinese and the Indian communities in these parts. The Chinese did not limit their sympathy to paying lip-homage but were actively helping the Indians there by all means. To give an instance, on the National Day, (Double Tenth) of China, the Chinese community in Bangkok sent a lorry full of fruits and vegetables to the Bangkok camp where most of the A. H. F. personnel were interned. The British Camp Commandant was very much annoyed at this, but could not refuse it lest the Chinese Community should feel offended.

Meanwhile the 'discharged' civilian recruits of the A. H. F. found themselves completely at bay owing to the fact that they had but little money with them at the time of their release. Most of these persons had contributed all their property to the Azad Hind Sangh, prior to their joining the A. H. F. Hence, they were literally penniless. But for the timely help extended to them by the local Gwala community, they would have undergone a lot of suffering. Besides those who were released from Bangkok camps, about 500 civilian recruits (mostly men from the U. P.) arrived in Bangkok, after being released from Malaya. They also were utterly penniless when they arrived. The Finance Department of the League tried to improve their condition by giving some monetary help from its funds. Their





***The Late Sri Rash  
Behari Bose  
First President of the  
I. I. L.***

timely efforts were stopped in the middle owing to the sudden arrest of Pt. Raghunath Shastri, the Finance Secretary, and the confiscation of the Sangh Fund. Being itself mostly poor, it is highly creditable on the part of the Gwala community to have nobly come forward to support these helpless men. It is pointed out that those who came from Malaya were mostly disease-stricken owing to malnutrition and lack of medicines. At present these noble sons of India are probably leading a laborious life, working as watchmen, milk-vendors and so on. India must recognize their services rendered to their motherland. I regret, our people still do not know much about these Gwalas and Coolies in Thailand, Malaya, and Burma.

The I. N. A. was allowed to remain in their camps as usual for more than 3 weeks after surrender. The Camp Commanders were responsible for their respective camps. The I. N. A. maintained its discipline throughout.

On 26th September the I. N. A. were ordered to move to a prisoners-of-war cage. No arrangements were made to collect the I. N. A. personnel from various camps, which were lying in a radius of 40 miles of Bangkok. The I. N. A. men came to the cage at their own expense.

From the very first day in that cage, the I. N. A. men faced inhuman treatment. They were herded in big godowns like cattle. The arrangements for water and latrine were very poor. For sometimes no rations were provided by the British. The Indian Independence League used to provide all the necessities.

Then the trouble eropped up on the question of salute. The British demanded that the I. N. A. should salute the British officers. The I. N. A. personnel refused on the ground~~s~~ that they were prisoners of war and as such would salute from a sepoy to a general in the same way. They also told that they were not I. A. men and as such, could not be forced to salute the British who threatened to use force in order to get their orders obeyed. Loaded pistols were put against their chests and bayonets were charged, still the I. N. A. men did not yield. Many were sent to the prison cells.

After few days senior officers, Colonels S. A. Malik, Thakur Singh Raturi, Chopra and Capt. Ganeshi Lal were removed to Jail, and later brought to India by air. The British thought these Officers to be the cause of trouble. But they were mistaken. The men were determined not to yield.

Later on a Scotch Colonel, Commander of the 4/5th Gurkha Rifles, called all the I. N. A. officers and threatened to use force. But such threats were not paid any heed to. Then new tactics were used. Col. Kulwant Singh of the I. A. started sending for the I. N. A. officers one by one and tried to frighten or bribe them. But this also proved in vain.

One or two Officers, however, happened to be weak-minded persons. So they yielded before the British tactics. One officer turned out to be too mean. He started playing into the hands of the British Officers and had occasional drinks, with them. He tried to win support of some of

the officers secretly. He perhaps got another officer on his side. He then tried to bring the unit commanders on his side. The result was, that the unit commanders gave him hell and abused him. He then conspired with the British Camp Commander, who called all the unit Commanders and requested them to help him in reorganising the I N. A. into B. I. A. But the unit Commanders did not yield. In the long run however, this traitor officer was successful in separating the civilians from the former I. A. personnel.

On 10th October all the I. N. A. troops were taken to Bairngang Jail, outside Bangkok, where no outsider was allowed to come nearby.

### Bangkok to Chiangmai

I have already described the conditions of the staff of the Azad Hind Government and Azad Hind League after the Japanese surrender. It was pitiable. On one hand the F. S. S. was harassing these workers, and on the other, it was becoming more and more a problem as to how to make their both ends meet.

Under such circumstances, I decided to leave Bangkok for India. But the route was not yet open. Hence the only way left for us was the land route. I discussed the matter with four of my friends. To my happy surprise I came to know that one of my closest friends had already thought of this thing. This friend of mine, whose name, I am not mentioning, is a brave, bold and courageous young man, for whom I have great regard. He is a sincere worker for the cause of our motherland and a man who acts according to the convictions he holds.

So my friend, myself and another friend of mine made out a plan and decided to leave Bangkok. We did not have many belongings with us there in Bangkok, except a number of books, which we entrusted to our friends. We took a medium size leather bag each. Each of the boxes contained, 2 pants, two shirts, one mosquito-net two under wears, 2 singlets one ordinary blanket, one torch, few match boxes, candles, few books, writing pad and pencils.

On the first of November, we left our residence and spent our night at a Chinese Hotel, as the train bound for northern Siam was to leave at 7 a.m., the next morning. We booked our seats that night.

Next morning, that is on the 2nd of November, we boarded the train, bade farewell to Bangkok, where I had come as a delegate to the Bangkok Conference, the foundation of our movement and where I had lived for more than three long years, and launched upon our journey the route of which we did not at all know.

The train was packed to the full. At night about 10 p.m. we reached Vishnulok, where we had to change our train. We got into another train, which was bound for Lampang—a place about 350 miles from Bangkok and from where we had to take another train.

Next morning that is on the 3rd we reached a river, whose bridge had been destroyed as a result of bombardment during the war. We crossed the river by boats, and across the river a train was standing by, but the engine was missing. We had to wait for the engine for

four hours.

At long last the engine came. I think it was of a nineteenth century model, a small engine, which could not pull more than two bogeys. The ~~passenger~~ <sup>passenger's</sup> number was too much for the two bogeys. We could not get any accommodation. Hence we climbed up the roof of the compartment—a very risky job. It took us more than 36 hours to cover that distance of 150 miles to reach Lampang. On the way the engine went out of order at least five to six times and we had to remain sometimes in the jungle and sometimes in the hills. We also had to go without food and water.

Somehow or other we did reach Lampang. From there we boarded another train, which ran smoothly and we reached Chiengmai on 5th November at about 1 p. m. We booked two rooms in a Chinese Hotel there and had a shave and a good bath, which had been denied to us for the last four days.

We had about two thousand Ticals with three of us. The Official rate at that time was Ticals five to Re. 1. But we got into touch with some kind friends who helped us in getting Rs. 700 in exchange for Tes. 2100. We also contacted some people in Chiengmai who gave us information about the land route to Burma. It was a jungle and hilly route.

### **Towards and Across the Thai Burma Border.**

On the morning of 8th November we left Chiengmai by a bus for a place called Chandaw—53 miles from Chiengmai. It was a zigzag road



through the hilly area which our bus covered. At about one p.m. we reached our destination. There was only one eating shop—a Chinese one. The food was awful. From Chandaw we had to go to Navai, a village about 23 miles from Chandaw, and situated on the Thai Burma Border. The road was unknown to us. We had to go on foot, but we wanted to hire a bullock cart—the only available conveyance, at least to serve as guide. But it was difficult to get one. Bullock carts were many there, but none was ready to go along with us. Their dialect was Greek to us. Wherever we went, the question was “Ki Kan Bahu Ka?” We did not understand it. At last, came a cartman, who was going to Navai. It was good luck. We settled with him for twenty five ticals. We took our luggage and went to the house of our friend cart-driver. It was getting dark. We bought some boiled rice, packed in bamboo, and some peanuts.

Next morning at about 5 A.M. we embarked upon our journey. The bags were kept in the cart, while we were to walk. After 3 to 4 miles, we left the main road, and took a foot path leading through the jungles.

Right amidst the jungle we came across many fierce jungle faces. We were ready for all eventualities. But no untoward incident took place,

At about 12 p.m. we reached a village on the bank of a stream, where we took our bath, and had our lunch with a friend of our cart-driver. Our cart-driver was a humorous old man. Whether any body asked him or not, he would tell him

"These three Indians are going to Navai." "Oh, is it so?" was the reply. After passing through many villages with stranger's eyes staring at us, we, somehow or other reached Navai, late in the evening. As soon as we got into the village, we came to know, that it was the border post, and the residents were only police men. They said to us, "Whither young folks?" "Just so so," was our reply, "we have come here for health reasons." "Health reasons? Here malaria is rampant!", one of them told us. "We will go back tomorrow," one of us said.

We were given a quarter outside the village. As soon as we were alone, we started planning our next move. We thought of moving away towards the border, that very night. But one of us got fever. Two of us went to the village, and asked a young lady to help us in cooking our food. She was kind. She did it for us. Then we asked an old lady to give us some room in her hut, so that we should be able to pass a comfortable night. The old lady agreed, and we moved in there. The night was chilly but comfortable.

The next morning that is on the 10th November, the police officer called us and recorded our names with addresses. Two of my friends went to jungle side on patrol duty, so as to know the nature of the route. I remained behind. My friends returned at noon. They were dead tired. They had covered about ten miles but could not make out the way. We were rather disappointed, and we actually thought of going back, but to our good fortune, no cart was then available.

We then thought of going straight to the village Chief and ask his advice in this connection. The Chief happened to be the husband of the same young lady, who helped us in preparing our dinner, the previous night. The Chief himself was suffering from a cancer on his right hand. We gave him some medicated powder, and dressed his hand. The lady helped us a lot and the Chief agreed to direct us across the border. But he told us that we were proceeding on our own risk, as the next jungle was full of tigers and snakes and for forty miles ahead there was no habitation. We were determined and did not care for any danger or risk.

### **Kings on one day and Prisoners on the other**

Next morning that is on 11th November, we took our bags and started onward on foot. We took some boiled rice, chillies, salt and water with us. Our guide was the telegraph wire, which the Japanese had installed during the war.

By noon our water was finished. Our light hand bags became a burden. And then there was no water visible. Through thick jungles, we were proceeding onwards without any weapon with us. That did not matter. What mattered most was water. It was not to be had in that jungle. We got tired, and started proceeding after intervals of 15 minutes' rest. At about 3 P. M. we saw on our track fresh impressions of tiger paws. We understood there was a tiger somewhere nearby. Hence we made some sticks and carried them along with us. But that increased our burden.

At about 3-30 P. M. we were taking rest,

when one of us looked above. There was an amla tree. We stoned at it and got some amlas. The fruit helped in quenching our thirst. We filled our pockets with them and proceeded onwards. We were now preparing to pass the night in the jungle, when at about 4-30 P.M. I saw the top of a house. "There is a house," said I. Others looked towards that side and uttered "Yes, yes." It was a ray of hope, as we thought we had reached a village. A few steps ahead was some water as well, but very dirty. Slowly and steadily we entered the village and occupied the house which I had seen, and which was vacant. It was a big village, with tall grass every where. No human being was in sight. We shouted but no response. Then myself and one of my comrades went into the village, while the third remained behind. Both of us went into every hut. Nothing was available inside the huts, but outside there were lots of fruit trees. Orange, plums and many other fruits were available. We had to approach these trees through thick and tall grass. We plucked a lot of fruits. And at the other end of the village flowed a small stream, where we had a wash and filled our bamboo bottles with water. We returned to our hut at about 6-30 P.M. By that time our comrade had cleaned the place and had lighted the fire.

It was a deserted village and we were its kings. We made fire out of any thing we liked. We plucked fruits ~~as much~~ as we needed and even more.

At about 7 P. M. the frost set in. It became cold, we made a big bonfire, so as to protect

ourselves from cold, wild beasts and robbers. It was terribly cold at night. We had to light the fire at least five times to keep ourselves warm at night.

Next morning we got up early, and ~~got ourselves~~ ready as quickly as possible. On the walls of our hut we wrote our names and slogans like "Netaji Zindabad" "Inqilab Zindabad" and some quotations from Netaji's speeches.

With "On to Delhi" on our lips we left "our" village at 7 A.M. The telegraph wire was of course our only guide. The path was thorny. At about 8-30 A.M. we reached another village which was also deserted. We were the kings of that village as well. We plucked some fruits and had our breakfast and proceeded.

At about 9 A.M. we heard somebody coughing. It was pleasant to hear some human voice. An old man frightened, like a lamb, became visible. He wanted to run back. We said to him "Come on, old man. Tell us where ~~are~~ you coming from?"

"Who are you? Japanese?" retorted the old man. "No fear. We are Indians," said I. "Thank God. I thought you were Japanese," poured out the old man with a sense of relief. Well I am coming from Ban Mukhiam. Where are you going?"

"To Monghan", said my friend. "By the way, what is the name of the two villages, we are just coming from?"

"Ban Namaloi and Ban Kheo," told the old man.

The old man went away and we proceeded onwards through the thick jungles. We were now in the Southern Shan States (Eastern Burma).

It was about 9 A M, when we saw three ladies. As soon as they saw us they ran away into the jungles. We did not understand why they ran. We started again. After we had gone half a mile, we saw a young fellow, who too ran away at our sight. Thus we saw many people, with swords and other weapons in their hands. They ran away as soon as they saw us. We were not afraid of that. But what we feared was that some of them might not attack us in sheer fright.

At about 11 A M. we reached the bank of a stream. On the other bank was situated a village whose name we later came to know as Ban Tongkapuan. We kept our boxes on the ground and one of us went towards the wooden bridge in order to go across to the village. He later told us that the whole village was in fright and all the villagers ran away. There was however one Buddhist monk to whom my friend said that being a Buddhist, he should not run. The monk stopped, and when he learnt from my friend that we were Indians and not Japanese, he asked all the villagers to come back. He offered tea to my friend.

In the meanwhile I too followed my friend. But hardly had I gone a few yards, when our third comrade called me back. I turned back and saw that some body was talking to my friend. This comrade of ours did not understand the language, which was more akin to Siamese. I went back and saw the stranger was an old man,

and looked like a Siamese. I said, "Yes please."

"How many of you have come ?", he said.

"Three please."

"Any body following you ?"

"No."

"Any Japanese along with you."

"No. The Japanese have been defeated, and put into concentration camps. We are Indians."

At that time, I turned back, and found a Shanee in the uniform of a Seargent along with seven soldiers with rifles with fixed bayonets, machine guns and hand-grenades in their hands. At this I said to the old man, "Why those friends are standing away? Please call them here, we are friends and not foes."

They talked something, and then the soldiers came nearer. The Seargent shouted at me, "Who are you ?"

"Indians" I answered.

"How many ?"

"Three."

"Any more ?"

"No."

"I want to search your boxes."

"You may please."

The Seargent searched my bag, and said "Any weapons with you ?"

"Nothing my friend."

In the meanwhile, my companion, who had gone to the village, returned and then the three

of us were asked to take our bags on our heads, and follow the Seargent to the next village—Ban Mukhiam. We were prisoners!

### Prisoners for Guests ?

We had to walk—hungry and thirsty in the hot sun for over an hour to reach Ban Mukhiam. On our way we were led by the Seargent whose name we later came to know as Syt. V. Chingta, and many other villagers armed with rifles and swords joined him. When we reached the outskirts of the village, a Burmese gentleman came and spoke to us in broken Hindustani. When we replied to him in Hindustani, others got assured that we were Indians and not Japanese.

We reached the village at 12-30 P. M. We were taken to the house of the Seargent. He called all the villagers to his house. We were asked to sit in the middle, and all the villagers were around us. V. Chingta, at once wrote a letter, and sent it probably to the next village.

Some questions were put to us. The villagers were glad to know that the Japanese had been defeated. They had seen pamphlets dropped by the British planes, that the war had terminated. But the people of the Shan States, being the victims of two Imperialisms—British and the Japanese—disliked the Japanese, and did not believe the British. Hence those pamphlets had not convinced them that the war had actually ended.

Then our bags were searched. Every item in the bags was recorded. Every body was keenly watching our belongings. They were surprised to find that we had no weapons. They wondered



how we crossed the thick jungles, ~~ridden~~ with snakes and tigers. Then our pockets were also searched. The amla plums brought laughter from all sides.

The atmosphere changed. There was a friendly look from all the faces. The young and beautiful wife of the Seargent then came forward with these words, "So for these youngsters you and your army went armed with guns and hand grenades?" Every body laughed. Then she turned towards us and said, "Now, young fellows, what about your meals?" /

"We have had nothing since this morning," one of us said.

"Sorry to know this. Well, now, the meals will be ready soon" said Madame Chingta.

Meanwhile V. Chingta prepared a report and sent it probably to the next village through a messenger. At the same time, we started shaving—the whole village watching us performing that feat.

The meals were ready by 2-30 P.M. It was a sumptuous lunch.

In the afternoon, we had a bath, after which we used our hair cream. The Seargent wanted to have some of it and when he got it, he was so pleased that he wrote a recommendatory letter for us.

That night we had a comfortable sleep. It was quite cold.

On the next morning 13th November, V. Chingta gave a whistle and two coolies and two armed soldiers came there. Our bags were carried by

the coolies, while armed soldiers were to accompany us for our protection.

We left for Monghan—about 25 miles away—on foot.

At about 10 30 A.M. we reached a village, where information had already reached about our arrival. Our lunch was prepared at the residence of the village Chief, who received us very warmly. People were very hospitable. Their questions centred around the end of the war—news which gave them relief. They offered us fruits, beetle-nuts and other things and were very pleased when we accepted the same.

At about noon, we proceeded onwards. After passing through many small localities we reached our day's destination—Monghan—at about 4 30 P.M. We were received by the village Chief and were provided with accommodation at the village Panchayat house, which was situated just opposite to the village pagoda. The whole village gathered there to greet us. A controversy started between the Chief and the village school teacher, as to who should arrange for our meals. When we came to know of this, we offered them a solution, that both might please send the dinner, and we would settle with that. It was done accordingly and we finished those delicious dishes like hungry wolves. It was cool at night, but the night was spent quite comfortably.

The night passed and next day *i.e.* on the 14th of November, we got up early, to be ready again for our journey onwards. The village Chief arranged for a bullock-cart and two armed escorts. At about 7 A. M. we started off.

After passing through several small villages, we reached a bigger village at about 12 noon. As usual the village Chief came to receive us. We were led to the Panchayat hall, where the villagers gathered. They explained to us how they fought and protected themselves during the war. These people were very simple and ignorant. They thought that India was already independent. They were much scared of the white man.

Meanwhile the lunch was ready. It was brought by all the charming village women, as if we were state guests. Beetle-nuts, cigarettes and cold water in silver utensils were offered to us.

At about 1 P.M. we resumed our journey. Our destination was Mongtung, the capital of Mongpan State. On that day we had to cover about 25 to 30 miles, all on foot as the bullock cart was too small to carry us. We had to pass through hills and jungles before we reached Mongtung, at about 5-30 P.M. Mongtung is situated on a very charming and beautiful site. Surrounded by hills and paddy fields, this small town is situated on the bank of a small stream. We felt immense pleasure to have reached that place.

We were strait led to the Mayook (Prince Minister of the State.) He received us very cordially. Some villagers gathered there and asked us a few questions and then asked us to take rest.

Mayook's old mother prepared a fine and delicious dinner for us. At night we were told by our host that we were to stay there for three nights before we proceeded onwards.





*Sri Anand Mohan Sahay, Secretary with  
Ministerial Rank to the A. H.  
Government, who was in Japan,  
since 1923, advocating  
the cause of Indian  
Freedom.*

We did not like it, and whispered to each other, "Are we guests, or prisoners? May be we are to be handed over to some higher authorities."

We stayed at Mongtoon for four nights. During that time we witnessed the bazar, which used to be held twice a week. The villagers used to gamble a lot at night. And the tragic part of the story is that the Mayook himself used to be the gambling boss. Besides, Mayook was a pakka money lender. He was a widower, and was in search of a new wife. As a man, he was a nice person, a very good host and a good administrator, I believe. His mother had a great influence over him. The inhabitants there are generally peasants—poor peasants.

### **A Week Through Jungles And On The Bank Of Salween**

On the morning of 17th November our host told us that we were to leave for our next destination—Mongpang—at 2 P. M. on that day, and that he and his paraphernalia consisting of five coolies and four armed men was to accompany us. We did not understand why to embark upon a journey at 2 P. M., and why not in the morning. It was only later on, when we crossed those thick and blind jungles, that we understood that Mayook's programme was according to plans.

We bade good-bye to Mayook's mother and at about 12.45 we started our journey on foot, along with those coolies, who carried lot of rations and our bags.

At about 3.30 p. m. we reached a village situated in the hills after covering about 8 miles, where we were to pass our night. The village chief after learning about the Mayook's arrival, rushed to us and payed homage to the Mayook. He also arranged for the dinner. It was very chilly at night and before we went to sleep the Mayook told us that we were to leave at 4 a. m. the next morning.

Next morning it was 18th. Cold had made us numb. We started at 7 a. m. We had our bamboo bottles filled with water. Soon we got into hilly tracks. We were climbing up and up. At about 10.30 a. m. we were on the top of a hill. This was the station. There was a neglected hut, with walls gone with the wind. We prepared our meals—rice and fish, and finished with it. We resumed our journey at 12 noon. Sometimes we were up on the hill and sometimes down in the valley—dry valleys. No stream was visible. No water was available. We were thirsty and tired. Thus we crossed many hills, and at last at about 4.30. reached a valley, where there was a stream.

We encamped ourselves on the bank of the stream. Around us were big hills and thick jungles, said to be infested with snakes and tigers. We had a wash and prepared our meals. After we took our meals, we went to sleep as we were dead-tired. It was terribly cold. Hence we had to make fire many times at night.

Next morning we prepared some tea-without-sugar and at 6.30 a. m. resumed our journey onwards. That day we had to cross valleys after

valleys. The foot-path was full of thorny shrubs, piercing our legs like pinpricks. Our legs had become bloody. And above all we had to cross many streams—on that day we crossed not less than 160 streams big and small, all dangerous, flowing through thick jungles of bamboo trees. Sometimes we had to pass under the falls. The scenes were picturesque.

At last in the afternoon at about 4 p. m. we reached the banks of the Salween. Flowing between two hills, with a terrible speed, the Salween was picturesque as well as dreadful. We crossed it by *canoes*, and across the river there was a hut, where we were to put up at night. Our dinner finished, I and my two comrades went to the bank of Salween.

It was full moon, Purnima, that night. From behind the hills the moon came up, and those hills presented a dreadful scene, as if a giant monster was slumbering. And the Salween, she was roaring. We sang to our full. Perhaps the Salween in that area enjoyed for the first time the modern songs of India.

It became colder, and at nine, we returned to our hut and went to bed.

Next day was again a stream-ful journey. We crossed about 130 streams. Sometimes up above the hills so high and sometimes down into the valley. The day's journey brought us to a village—a jungle village, where we were provided with a shelter. It was about 5 p. m. when we reached there. We had a shave, after many days. Our rations were already finished. We made up the deficiency there.



We were told at night that Mangpan would be reached next day.

### **Meeting an Indian After Two Weeks.**

On the morning of 21st November—our Provisional Government of Azad Hind day—we left in high spirits as the Mayook had given an assurance that there were Indians in Mongpan. We passed by many villages. At about 1 p. m. we, three of us, rushed forward, and the Mayook and his party were left behind. Then out of us three also one got separated. Myself and my friend reached Mongpan at about 2 p. m. It was a big town—quite big. We enquired whether Mayook had arrived there. No body could give a definite reply. Then we went in search of some Indian in the town.

After about one hour's wandering we reached a shop, where a beautiful, young Indian lady was sitting. She did not notice us. I went forward and spoke to her a few words. It was a great pleasure to talk to an Indian lady, after such a long time, and at that time of distress. She assured us that we would be provided with room to sleep and food as well. But she told us that we would have to wait for her father-in-law for final permission.

We left the charming lady, in order to search our third comrade and the Mayook. They reached there about 4 p. m. The Mayook insisted that we should take dinner with him. We could not help but accept his hospitable offer.

We took our dinner and brought our bags to

our Indian host. The old man received us very coldly. We had the intention of staying there for at least two nights as we were dead-tired, but the cold reception of our compatriot forced us to amend our decision. We however passed our night in his stable where we came across a poor Indian who encouraged us and made arrangements for a bullock cart for us. The cart was to take us to the next place, Linkhe, where a bus could be available.

The next morning, on the 22nd of November, we bought some rice, vegetables, peanuts and other necessities, and resumed our journey on our bullock cart. We had gone about five miles, when we saw an Indian young man waiting for us on the road side. He had stopped there as he listened to our shoutings and songs. When our cart reached him, he asked the driver to stop and asked us who we were, where we were coming from and so on. When he came to know about our intention to go to India, he forced us to become his guests for at least a few hours. He took us to his house, entertained us with sugarcane-juice, slaughtered about half a dozen chickens and prepared a nice dinner. We were extremely grateful for his hospitality. We remained his guests for about six hours, and then at 10 p. m. when the moon came out we resumed our journey.

At about 1.30 a. m. (at night) we reached Sawa. We had a letter of introduction for the chief of that village, but as it was midnight, we preferred not to disturb him. We slept in the bullock cart itself. Three of us packed ourselves

into the cart, as it was too cold.

At 5.30 a. m. we woke up the driver and started onwards. The bullocks were too slow. Hence we decided to drive them ourselves. We made the bullocks run at double their usual speed. At about 10.30 a. m. we reached a stream, where we took bath and washed our clothes. At 11.00 a. m. we proceeded, and at 1 p. m. we reached a river, which we had to cross to go to Linkhe, lying another 3 miles ahead.

There we cooked our own food, and after lunch, we crossed the river. At about 4.30 p. m. we reached Linkhe. We straight went to an Indian shop, whose proprietor's name we had asked in Mongpan. This Indian brother was a nice man, and he gladly accepted to become our host. He informed us that there was no public bus running but *seac* lorries used to come every three or four days there and convey some passengers. We were lucky enough, as a *seac* truck appeared at that time. We rushed to the driver. He was a Burmese. He agreed to take us to the next big place, Loilum, next morning.

Our host gave us a delicious dinner and provided us with a nice room and many blankets, as it was terribly cold.

Next day it was 24th of November. We took our bags and went to the appointed place at 8 a.m. We had to wait for four hours before the truck finally started. Loilum was 70 miles away. The truck had to cover a major part of this distance through hills.

It was at about 7 p. m. that we reached

Loilum. It was pitch dark. We did not know where we were. We started walking towards one side. Hungry, tired and shivering with cold we did not know where we were heading to. Somebody directed us to a hut, where some Indians were putting up. We reached that hut, and asked for shelter. Our compatriots were poor folks. They directed us towards the bazar and Thakur Bari. We again took our bags on our heads and started walking towards the direction we were shown. A young Indian boy met us on our way and he led us to a small Indian restaurant. We took our dinner there and asked the restaurant manager as to how to go to Taunggee. He informed us that there was a Marvari Seth who had come from Kalaw and was to go back the next morning. He could take us to Taunggee. We requested the manager to go to the Seth there for our sake and request him to give us a lift in his truck upto Taunggee. He was kind enough to do us that favour. He brought an encouraging reply, and we went to the Thakur Bari to pass our night.

The night was bitterly cold. We passed our night shivering.

Next morning we got up early and went straight to the restaurant. The Seth was also there.

"Oh, you are the young fellows, who wish to go to Taunggee. Where are you coming from?" said the Seth.

"From Rangoon", replied one of us. "Rangoon. ? And these bags ? New ? seems rather incredible ?" said the Seth.

We hesitated to reply. He was shrewd. He did not ask any other questions. From his talk with others we came to know that he had been the chairman of the Kalaw Branch of the Indian Independence League, and had been released only recently. We felt satisfied to know that.

### **Meeting with Lt. Col. Lakshmi**

The truck left Loilum at 8 a. m. On our way we told Seth Moti Lal who we were and where we were going to. He was glad to know it, and invited us to Kalaw, where, he informed us, Lt. Col. Lakshmi of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment, was interned.

We reached Taunggee at about 3 p. m. and after a rest of one hour we proceeded onwards. The road was billy and our truck could not move more than ten miles per hour. Many a time it went out of order.

Thus we reached Kalaw at 10 p. m. It was pitch dark. Biting cold wind was blowing. We were shivering as we had no warm clothes with us.

The residence of our host was made like a big shed, as his houses had been destroyed during the war. It was a big family. We were introduced to all the members. The hostess was a very hospitable Marwari lady. She prepared a delicious meal for us. In the meanwhile fire was lighted in order to make us warm. After we took our meals, we went to bed. Our host provided us with many blankets as it was terribly cold.

Next morning on the 26th, November, two of my comrades became sick, as they took cold bath

early in the morning. Both of them got high fever.

In the meanwhile, Seth Moti Lal went to see Dr. Lakshmi and informed her about our arrival. She was very glad to know about it. She came to our place at about 1 p. m. The Colonel was, inspite of her internment, in good health and in high spirits. The meeting with our fair commander was a source of great encouragement to us. She told us her story, and we told her ours. After learning from us about our adventurous journey, she admired our courage and congratulated us on our successfully crossing those dangerous jungles. She also advised us regarding our next journey.

In Kalaw we met many of the I. N. A. men, who were formerly residents of Malaya. They were very glad to see us. They helped us in many ways. One of them expressed his desire to accompany us to India and we gladly accepted his company.

We enjoyed the hospitality of our host for three nights, and on the morning of 28th November we left Kalaw. Before leaving Kalaw we got some help from our friends there in the shape of medicines and money. I have no words to express our thanks to Seth Moti Lal and Col. Lakshmi and others.

At about 11 a. m. we crossed the Shan States border and entered into Burma proper. It was quite dark when we reached Thazi. There too were many I. N. A. men making both their ends meet by doing some petty jobs. We stayed there with the same I. N. A. men.

Thazi used to be a big town before the war. But now there was left no trace of the town. It was flat. The railway station had been completely destroyed.

From Thazi to Mandalay—Our next destination—the railway train service, free of charge, had been started. But it was necessary to obtain passes. Hence it took us two days before we obtained passes. During these two days we washed our cloths and took sufficient rest to prepare ourselves for the next journey.

On December the 1st. We got passes and left for Mandalay. We reached there in the evening. One of our comrades got sick, as soon as we reached there. In Mandalay, we stayed with an old south Indian lady, whose husband and son were in the I.N.A. She lost one of them. But she was in good spirits. She was staying there with her young daughter, passing her days by selling Appam. She considered it a great pleasure to accommodate some needy I. N. A. men. Even otherwise we had no other go but to stay there. The accommodation problem in Mandalay was terrible. Not a single building in that once beautiful city was left untouched by the cruel bombs. It had been very badly ruined.

Next day we contacted some I.N.A. men and through them an I. N. A. Captain, who was a doctor. He helped us a lot. He encouraged us. Later on he provided us with valuable dry rations which proved to be very helpful.

On the 3rd of December, we shifted from the old lady's to the Arya Samaj building, where

many of the I.N.A. men were residing. It was a big building with walls blasted away during the war.

On that day another comrade fell ill. An Indian doctor looked after us and provided medicines to my comrades. The I.N.A. soldiers, who were themselves very poor, helped us a lot. Sympathy was welling up in the hearts of every one who belonged to the movement.

Before I proceed further, I would like to describe the conditions in Burma as we saw them.

### **Conditions of the Azad Hind Fauj Personnel in Burma after Japanese Surrender.**

As I was in Thailand at the time of the Japanese surrender, I do not know actually what happened to the workers and personnel of the Azad Hind Sangh and Azad Hind Fauj there. But yet as I and my comrades passed through Burma on our way to India from Thailand, we visited many towns, as I have already described, and met several groups of I. N. A. personnel and Sangh workers. The facts we gathered from them, and whatever we saw with our own eyes is as follows:—

It was said that in the beginning, the British authorities arrested almost all the leading workers of the Azad Hind Sangh, apart from capturing all the I.N.A. personnel including the civilian volunteers. Against some of these prominent workers of the Sangh, legal action was taken under the Defence of Burma Act. But the Government lost almost all these cases and the persons involved were released afterwards. One such person was



Shri Motilal Marwadi. He was kept under custody for some days and was detained in his own house for more than four months, *i. e.* till he won the case against the Government. In spite of all these things we found him full of spirit and enthusiasm. He proudly told us that he would continue to serve his nation in every possible way and would always feel proud of having been a responsible worker in the Azad Hind Sangh. This was not an empty boast, as we found for ourselves as already described that the gentleman was doing all he could to help the ex-Azad Hind Sangh workers as well as the Azad Hind Fauj personnel. He helped us greatly, after he was convinced that we were genuine workers of the Azad Hind Sangh.

We were told that similar legal proceedings were carried on by the British authorities against most of the prominent workers of the Sangh. But their spirit of patriotism could not be extinguished in the least by such difficulties.

Regarding the I. N. A. personnel the British authorities adopted the same methods as in Thailand. The civilian volunteers were separated from the old British Indian Army men, and were taken to different camps scattered all over Burma. There they were kept for some weeks during which period, they had to do hard fatigue. We were informed that in many camps the civilian recruits disobeyed the unjust orders of the camp commandants, which caused further trouble and difficulties for them. One gentleman told us that he and his comrades were taken to a camp after being re-grouped, with no arrangement for supply-

ing them water. For more than twenty hours the encamped persons were not given any water at all. An Indian military doctor, who happened to visit the camp, was shocked at the horrible conditions there and ordered immediate arrangements to be made to supply water to the prisoners. The sufferings of the civilian recruits did not end there. All their personal belongings as well as the articles of their kit were confiscated and they were released with only the dress on their body at the time of release. One can very well imagine the pitiable condition of these brave soldiers as a result of this unjust treatment. Most of these civilian recruits had come from various places in Malaya and Thailand. They did not know the language of the country, viz. Burmese, they had no friends to help them, nor did they have any home to shelter them. The only strength in them was their number, their unity and their indomitable spirit of nationalism.

Fortunately most of these released civilian soldiers had assembled in the capital city of Burma, Rangoon. Their estimated strength was more than 3,000. Though the British Government tried to disregard their status, yet all those men kept retaining their militant spirit and defied the authority of any alien power. They were so well keeping up the spirit of unity and organisation which had been imbued into them by their Netaji, that it was told to us, at an hour's notice one could gather all these soldiers at any desired place. We were informed that those of them here staying in Streets No. 51, 28 and 27 had formed an I. N. A. Association (of course, not

registered), the Headquarters of which was in Street No. 51. We were also told that the British Military authorities had declared these areas as out of bounds for their troops.

In Kambe, which is on the outskirts of Rangoon, and where there was an Officers' Training School of the I. N. A., there were about 100 to 150 civilian soldiers of the I. N. A. These people also were well organised and were contributing their mite to further the cause of their motherland. We heard that this area also had been declared out of bounds to the British Indian troops.

Another interesting thing to be mentioned here is, that some of these ex-I. N. A. men have opened hotels in which only those were allowed to enter, who responded to the Jai Hind greeting of the proprietor in the I. N. A. fashion. There was a hotel in Moghul Road which was named as Jai Hind Hotel.

This much about the conditions in Rangoon area. As for the other places in Burma, such as Kalaw, Thazi, Mandalay, etc., the I. N. A. civilian soldiers were not many in number, though their spirit of patriotism and organisation were as praiseworthy as those of their comrades in Rangoon. In Mandalay, the number of such ex-I. N. A. personnel was more than a hundred. These people were working as labourers for their living. They had to work from 9 a. m. to 5 p. m. carrying rice bags and such like for which they were paid the meagre wages of As. /15/- per day. Miserable though their lot was these brave soldiers lived in such an organised manner on the lines of I. N. A.

camps, that commanded admiration. During our stay in Mandalay, we were as I have already mentioned, putting up with these people in the Arya Samaj building which was their Headquarters. There were about 40 I. N. A. men staying there. (One of them had been a Naik in the I. N. A., and he had been made the Captain of the whole group. He maintained the discipline of the men, assigned them work, and looked after their welfare as in the I. N. A. The earnings of all the men were pooled together, and the expenses were borne collectively. By turns two persons were appointed as cooks. Food was distributed in the same manner as it used to be done in the I. N. A. camps.

One other interesting point is this : most of these young men were from the south and were accustomed to take tamarind in a considerable quantity daily with their meals. But in the I. N. A. there were no separate lungers for any people, and so these men had to give up tamarind eating. Now they were in a position to include that "delicacy" into their meals, but they refused to do so lest it might violate the regulations of the I. N. A. They are not very educated, these noble warriors of India's Army of Liberation. Nor do they know the A. B. C. of politics. But they have learnt how to live a disciplined life and that is an example worth emulating for all the youths of India.

Another thing we saw in Burma was that though themselves poor, these I. N. A. men rushed to the help of any person who had been in the I. N. A. or the Azad Hind Sangh. Though we

were in a better condition than they were, these spirited youths refused to allow us to spend anything from our pockets for our food or lodging. All the time we were in Burma, we were guests of either some I. N. A. men or Sangh workers.

Before writing anything about the conditions of the Sangh workers, it would be interesting to have an idea of the attitude of the rich Indians in Burma towards these I. N. A. men. So far as the rich Indians in Rangoon were concerned, we heard that they were sympathetic towards our soldiers and were rendering some help to improve their living conditions. This was because of the fact that the lives and properties of the Indians in Rangoon were saved from the Burmese hooligans and the B. D. A. only due to the foresight of Netaji. The story is now well known that after the evacuation of the Japanese from Rangoon, the I. N. A. under the instructions of Netaji, took charge of the administration of the place, and put veritable cordons around all the areas where Indians lived in majority. This frustrated the plans of the hooligans and looters to massacre the Indians and plunder their property. Indians in Rangoon felt more grateful to the I. N. A. on account of this fact, and their respect for the I. N. A. grew.

But it is regrettable that in Northern and Central Burma the condition was a bit different. The rich Indians there—with some exceptions, of course—changed with the arrival of the British, gave a cold shoulder to the I. N. A. and Azad Hind Sangh men. To take Mandalay





**Top.**     *The Leaping Tiger, I. N. A. Badge  
              in Europe.*

**Bottom.**   *Netaji addressing the I. N. A.,  
              somewhere in Europe.*

for example, the rich Indians had completely ignored the I. N. A. men. We heard that when the first batch of released I. N. A. men reached Mandalay with no proper clothing, no money and no friends to go to, the rich Indian residents there did not even do as much as to give them food and shelter. Some members of this batch, we were told died of illness and starvation, with no body to take care of them. The poor Indians however came forward, for, it was the poor, who did not change

The group of I. N. A. men staying in the Arya Samaj building told us that the Indian rich men who were in-charge of the institution threatened to throw them out if they did not vacate the building. But, after all, they were I. N. A. men. So they challenged the authorities to do so and 'stuck to their guns'. Their tenacity and the timidity of the authorities prevented any such thing from happening.

Something more about the Azad Hind Sangh workers who were then stranded in Burma. For the most part, their condition also was similar to that of the I. N. A. men. But some of them were well educated, some having friends and relatives to look after them, and one or two of them being rich. Such persons were then carrying on the work of the League in an admirable manner. Shri M. S. Doshi, who had been the representative of Shri Amritlal Seth's "Janma Bhumi" and other papers, and who was working in the Reconstruction Dept., of the Azad Hind Government started a Daily with the name of "Times of Burma". Within



a short period, this paper was stopped, the office sealed and he was arrested. The charge on him was that he wrote some articles which preached 'sedition'. But in the opinion of the Indians, to quote the words of Col. Lakshmi, "he was conducting the paper splendidly." Mr. Dosbi is now being tried by the Government of Burma for his activities during the Provisional Government of Azad Hind days.

In spite of this rigorous action taken against one of their colleagues, the other League workers did not lose their spirit. Many nationalistic dailies and weeklies in different languages, especially in Tamil, had been started and were doing great service in furthering the Nation's cause. One Tamil weekly, edited and printed by some of the Sangh workers, was named "Jai Hind". We saw some of its issues and were greatly impressed by the way in which it was being conducted. Especially, these papers were playing miracles in impressing the Indian military men.

Another remarkable thing was the change of the Burmese attitude towards Indians, and especially the I. N. A. During the war, even great Burmese leaders like Major General Aung San, were under the impression that the I. N. A. was playing against them in the hands of the Japanese. This was due to the fact that Netaji could get many things done which the so-called Independent Burmese Government could not. Even in Burma, the Azad Hind Government enjoyed a greater liberty and had more facilities than the Burmese Government had.

This caused jealousy in the minds of the Burmese leaders as well as the people in general and they started disliking the Indians.

But after the end of the war, many hidden facts came to light. The Burmese came to know that it was due to the incessant efforts of Netaji that the Japanese recognized the Burmese National Army, and allowed it complete freedom. Similarly, they also came to know the emptiness of British promises. The wholesale draining of Burma's resources, which started immediately after the occupation of Burma by the British, completely disillusioned them regarding the bonafides of the British assurances to grant Burma full self Government. Hence their change of attitude towards Indians. I and my comrades saw that complete amity prevailed between the Burmese and the Indians. And that in itself was a great service the I. N. A. has rendered to India.

### Across the Irrawady

On the 4th December, myself and our new companion, went out for patrol duty so as to enable ourselves to know the future course. We left at 8 a. m., and reached the Irrawady river at 10.30. a. m. The bridge of this calm and broad river had been destroyed. We crossed it by a boat. Across the river is situated the town of Sagain-13 miles from Mandalay. There we contacted some Indians and enquired from them, as to which road would easily lead us to the border. We also asked about the prominent and hospitable Indians staying in towns, which we

had to pass through. We were in the need of hospitable Indians, who could provide us with not only shelter but also food. After we satisfied ourselves we returned to Mandalay by 1 p. m.

Our two companions were however still not well. We asked our Doctor friend to do something as we were anxious to leave the place at the earliest. The I. N. A. soldiers however helped us a lot.

On the morning of December the 6th, all the four of us left Mandalay. Crossing the Irrawaddy, we reached Sagain at 9 a. m. Sir Reginald Dorman Smith, the Governor of Burma, happened to be there on that day. The result was that we had to wait for 4 hours before we could get a truck, which would take us to Shwebo 70 miles from Mandalay, our destination of the day. Shwebo is a small nice town, mutilated by the ravages of the war.

We straight went to the Gurudwara, where we had decided to put up for the night. We gave the impression to the people there as if we knew many men there. In that way we contacted the leading Indian there, who was very hospitable. He gave us good dinner, and good advice as well.

Next morning on the 7th December, we left Shwebo for Ye-U—25 miles ahead. By noon we reached our destination. On our way we halted at Minda, a small village, which used to be the Head Quarters of the 2nd M. T. Company of the 1st Division of the I. N. A. At Ye-U we had expected to stay with an Indian who was known

for his hospitality. But he received us very coldly. He did not offer even water. We were disappointed. We passed the day and night at the local Gurudwara. We could not get any proper and sufficient meals. At night some dacoities and murders were committed in the village. No body in the village seemed to be earnest for the happenings, as it was an every day affair then.

Our next destination was Kalewa 145 miles by a jungle road from Ye-U. SEAC trucks used to ply on that road. But no truck was available then. It was extremely dangerous to travel on foot. Hence we decided to go round about via Monywa and Chindwin River. Our host was kind enough to provide us four seats in his truck which was going to Monywa on business. Monywa is 58 miles from Ye-U and is situated on the bank of the Chindwin. He also gave the address of a hospitable Indian shopkeeper in Monywa.

We reached Monywa in the afternoon of 8th December. It was a big town, which had been the scene of pitched battles after the Imphal withdrawal. Here there was an I. N. A. advance hospital. We first went to the Gurudwara. It was completely demolished. Then we went to the shop of our Indian brother, whose address was given to us by our host at Ye-U. This man was nice and sympathetic. He immediately gave us a room. At night we told him as to who we were and what our intentions were. Knowing that, he provided us with dry rations. We had good meals after many days.

Next day we came to know that Kalewa was

not less than 200 miles from Monywa, and motor-boats of the R. C. L. Coy. used to ply under the SEAC flags. But to obtain seats on such boats, it was necessary to have passes, and these passes could be obtained only if one had some sort of movement order from the D. C's office. To achieve this end we contacted two Indian officers—one in the civil hospital and the other in the jail. While the former one was very nice and sympathetic, the latter—a Brahman was very arrogant and cold.

We ran from one office to another, and in the end came back disappointed. At night however we made some pudding to console ourselves. We discussed among ourselves and decided to leave the place the very next day by any available means.

Next morning on the 10th of December, we went to see our friend in the hospital, and he gave us a recommendatory letter for the D. C's office. This also turned out to be of no avail. When we returned to our "residence" we found our host also turned a turn-coat. Some body—had frightened him that he was harbouring dangerous elements in his house. So our host showed much anxiety to get rid of us. We had however already decided to be off, and were thankful to him for the kind hospitality he had accorded to us.

Hence we took our bags on our heads and went towards the Chindwin river. It was about 1 p.m. We hired an ordinary boat for one hundred rupees to Kalewa. The boatman boasted that

he would take us to our destination within four to five days.

### Six Nights in the Chindwin

Our boat started at 2 p. m. It was terrible from the beginning itself. The boat was to go against the current up above the hills. Hence it was to be towed up. Up to five p. m. it could not move more than 4 miles. We got tired the first day itself. We had some bread and honey with us. We satisfied our hunger with that, and slept in the boat.

At night it started raining. There was no shelter. We got drenched. Some how or other the morning came. It was still drizzling. The boat started moving, very very slowly. At about 12 p. m. while it was heavily raining we reached a village, Eian. Two of us went in to buy some rice and other necessary things.

In the meanwhile we noticed two R. G. L. motor boats coming from Monywa going to Kalewa. We waved to them, and one of them stopped far away. We ran through the mud, and talked to the Captain. The Captain agreed to take a bribe of fifty rupees to take four of us to Kalewa as we had no passes.

We settled off our boatman with twenty rupees and got into the motor-boat. As soon as we got on board, the Captain demanded seventy. We had no other go but to accept.

There were a few more passengers on board mostly Chinese. They had too much money with them, and the crew listened only to them and did not care for us, although the crew were

also Indians. All the crew except the driver were very unhospitable towards us. We made friends with the driver. We also found a young boy passenger—very poorly dressed and with no belongings. He had no money. We talked to him. His name was Hamid. He was also coming to India. He had lost his father, mother, and three sisters in Burma. We asked him to join us. He gladly agreed.

The boat would stop at 6 p. m., when we would prepare our dinner on the muddy beach. And in the morning we would get up at 4 a. m., and prepare our morning meals on the beach and then come back to the boat. We were not allowed to cook our meals on board the boat, as it was a gasoline-boat.

We were now five, our clothes were all torn. We looked like beggars. The crew perhaps thought in that way. Hence they did not like our going into the shed—the only shelter on the boat. It was raining throughout, and we were in great trouble. There were however scores of bags of rice covered by tarpoline. We, therefore, used to take shelter under that tarpoline.

The attitude of the crew being very offending, one day we had a big row with them. We reminded them that we were also Indians like them. The Captain apologised and there being a change in their attitude, we were a bit relieved of inconveniences.

On the afternoon of 15th December, the boat approached Kalewa. The boat stopped a mile from Kalewa, somewhere in the jungles. We alighted from the boat, and with our bags on our

heads, we took a jungle route. We walked for about an hour, and still we could not get out of the jungle. In the jungle we saw many broken and shattered tanks, armoured cars, trucks and so on.

It was about 5 p. m. that we reached a village, which we thought was Kalewa. But we were told that Kalewa had been completely destroyed during the war, and a new Kalewa had sprung up, on the other side of the river. We had to walk another two miles, before we could reach the bank of the Chindwin, from where we could see Kalewa, situated on the opposite bank. Tired, hungry and thirsty, we were disappointed to find that no boat was available. It was at about 6 p. m. that a small canoe came to our rescue. We hired it, and crossed the fast flowing and dangerous Chindwin in that small canoe. Our lives were hanging in balance while we were in that canoe.

New Kalewa is quite a big village. We were told there were some Indian residents in Kalewa. Four of us did not know the language, but Hamid made up this deficiency. We found out that there was a certain Indian who had recently arrived from India. We kept our bags at the shop, where he was reported to be putting up, and went in search of food. There was a Chinese chow chow shop. But the meals were not only very badly prepared but were also insufficient, and very costly.

We went back to the shop and met our host, very interesting and apparently hospitable. He told us that Netaji was already captured and



brought back to India and was released from Calcutta. The news was a surprise to us. Our host kindly provided us with a shelter for the night.

We learnt that Tamu—our next destination and a city situated on the Indo-Burma border was 131 miles from Kalewa. We also learnt that there were some trucks leaving the next morning for Tamu. Our host boasted that he had good relations with the Mayook ( Chief Officer ) of Tamu, and he would give us a recommendatory letter, which would help us to get a pass to cross the Indo-Burma border.

### **Towards the Indo-Burma Border.**

Next morning on the 16th December, we enquired about the trucks. The driver demanded one hundred rupees for one passenger. We had only fifty rupees in all left with us. We preferred walking to bargaining with the driver. Our host gave us recommendatory letters and after buying some dry rations we started on our journey towards Tamu on foot. We had covered only 2 miles when a policeman stopped us. After a few questions, however, he left us " to our fate". The road was fine, leading zigzag through the hills. At about 12 o'clock we reached a hilly stream. We decided to take rest under the bridge and prepared our lunch. We took bath and no sooner had we finished cooking rice and some sort of dal, than a Jeep came from Kalewa side. We stopped the Jeep, and requested the driver to help us at that time of need. We told him that two of us were sick, and that it would be kind of him

if he could take two of us along with him and also our bags. The driver—a young Gurkha—was a nice man. He agreed to take all of us to a rest house about 25 miles ahead. We were too glad to know of it. We left our cooked meals there and then and got into the Jeep.

In no time we reached the rest house. The Gurkha friend however was to proceed onwards. He agreed to take 2 of us and our bags along with him, to a place, 28 miles before Tamu.

The remaining three of us spent that night in the rest camp. There were five to six persons staying in the camp. They were hospitable people. They helped us in getting fresh vegetables and other necessary things.

The next morning we waited for some Jeep or truck, but none came. At 10 a. m. we started on foot. At about 12 noon we had just sat down to take rest, and had opened the last fruit tin given to us by our friend in Mandalay, and luck came to our rescue. We heard the sound of a Jeep, and in no time it approached us. We waved our hands, but the driver, who hailed from south India, did not stop, as he thought we were some Burmese. Then one of my comrades shouted in some south Indian language. That made the driver stop his Jeep. He welcomed us into his Jeep and shared in our tinned fruit. He told us he was going straight to Imphal and he would take us there without a pass. But we declined his offer with thanks, as we were to take two other friends on our way. Within two hours the Jeep covered the distance of 70 miles and at 2 p. m. we were with our friends. The Gorkhas with

whom our friends were putting up offered us tea, and we had just finished our tea when a truck came there. It was going to Tamu. We got into that truck and bade good bye to our Gorkha host.

The truck was to carry a lot of bamboos on the way. Hence it was about 5 p. m. when we reached Tamu—the last town before crossing the Indo-Burma border.

Tamu is mostly inhabited by Manipuris. They are nice and hospitable people. One of them agreed to give us shelter for the night. We heard that the Mayook had been out of Tamu and would be back after a week. It was disappointing news.

At night while we were taking meals in a hotel, we came across a man from Imphal, who was going to Imphal the next morning. He told us that before the war he had been a high official in Imphal, but had later joined the I. N. A. as a Captain. He invited us to his place and we passed our night with him. It was terribly cold at night.

Next morning, on the 18th of December—our last day in Burma—we went to the Mayook's house. We showed that recommendatory letter, given to us by our host at Kalewa. As soon as somebody went through the letter, it brought laughter, and somebody said, "Childish."

We then went to the Mayook's assistant. He refused to do any thing for us. We, however, came to know that the chief of the Refugee section was there. He was a Chin and a lieutenant. He was a nice gentleman, and granted us passes

to cross the border but only to four of us. He informed us that the fifth one being a resident of Burma for more than 13 years, could not get a refugee pass. Although we felt it very much and did not like to leave behind one of our companions but we were helpless.

We arranged with a truck driver and left Tamu along with our new friend (from Imphal) at 1-30 p.m.

### **Back to Motherland—in Imphal at last.**

We crossed the Indo-Burma border at 2-5 p.m. We were then in our motherland. We felt proud of that and also of the fact that our risky adventure had at long last come to an end without any untoward incident.

Our truck was moving through the mountains. It was very interesting journey. At about 7 p.m. we reached Palel—where the Tricolour kept flying for many months in 1944. Here the border police detained us for over one hour with a view to check our passes. We showed the passes we had obtained from the Refugee officer of Tamu. But it did not satisfy the police. It was our first experience with the Indian police after many years. In the meanwhile some Indian Army men who were strolling on the adjoining road, came to us, and asked as to what the matter was. We told them of the affair in detail, and they sympathised with us. When they saw the police still bothering us, they came into the police station and shouted at the police inspector. The poor inspector was curled down and had to certify our passes.

We left Palel at about 8.30 p.m. On our way to Imphal, our friend from Imphal, explained to us as to where the I. N. A. was fighting, where I.N.A. men died, where the British troops though superior in number and materials, could not stand against the I.N.A. and so on. There is a sort of lake about 6 miles from Imphal. Our friend told us that one unit of the I.N.A. had penetrated up to that lake.

It was at about 11 p.m. that we reached Imphal. We were thrilled. Sentiments and thoughts came to our minds which are beyond the ken of words which are always weak. This was the place, which was the target of our soldiers.

At night we put up with our Imphal friend. He had seen good days, but now was a poor man, and of course very hospitable. We only bowed to the warriors who had fallen there and had done their best. The grim battle that was waged by these brave sons of India for the liberty of Mother India, will go down in the history as the first concrete and solid step for the final emancipation of 400 millions of India from the clutches of a mighty and cruel imperialism. Imphal also made us aware that temporarily material had won over spirit.

We stayed in Imphal for two nights, during our stay there, we wandered about the whole city, and became familiar with every street and lane of that place.

On the 20th of December we left Imphal to continue our journey ON TO DELHI.

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## CHAPTER II

### Indians in Pre-War East Asia

There were a large number of Indians residing throughout East Asia, long before the East Asia War broke out. There was hardly any country, so to say any city, town or a village in East Asia, where one could not come across an Indian—a labourer, a watchman, a police-man, a shopkeeper, a money lender or a land lord. Our countrymen had gone to those places decades back. They had gone there in quest of food for their stomach. Majority of them were taken to East Asia as labourers in Malaya, Burma and Indo-China. Next to them in numbers were watchmen and policemen, who could be seen everywhere in Singapore, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Canton and other places. Then there was a business class, who had gone there as petty shopkeepers, and some of whom had made millions.

The occupations, followed by Indians in East Asia, were such that they did not have any respect from the local inhabitants. It was rather a policy of British Imperialism to take Indians to those areas as labourers, watchmen and policemen, so as to misrepresent India before the outside world. Also it is a well known fact that the police service carries with it more hatred than respect. This fact was realized by many a prominent and young Indian in East Asia, but they were helpless.

There is another thing worth mentioning. The British authorities in those areas did never

provide any facility to the Indian community. The labourers were not allowed to organise themselves. The business men had to carry on in face of tremendous handicaps. Indians throughout East Asia had to face insults not only from the British side but also from the local inhabitants. The only country in East Asia where Indians had respect was Japan. For, all Indians there were breathing an air of freedom. They were besides, representatives of big and rich business houses. Hence their higher standard of living.

A rough estimate of the Indian population would reveal that just before the East Asia war broke out, there were nearly three million Indian residents there, including over a million in Burma, about 800,000 in Malaya, about 40,000 in Thailand, 5,000 in Indo-china, about 50,000 in Java and Sumatra, about 5,000 in Bornio, about 3,000 in the Phillipines, about 20,000 in China, including Hong Kong and Shanghai and about 1,500 in Japan. Details of the community and its organisation in each territory can be stated as follows :—

### **In Burma.**

Majority of Indians in Burma were labourers, employed in oil fields, forests and the plantations. A good lot of them were rikshaw pullers. There were business men—big and small—and land lords and money lenders as well. The labour class mostly hailed from south India. Poverty stricken, they were only concerned with making both ends meet. Political consciousness was there, but it was all latent.

Before Burma was separated from India under







*Col. Laxmi, Leader of the Rani  
of Jhansi Regiment.*

the Government of India Act 1935, there was a provincial branch of the Indian National Congress. Other than that there was no such political organisation, which could attract the general mass of Indians.

The business men, however, had an Indian Chamber of Commerce, which was quite active in safeguarding the interests of the Indian business community there who were controlling about 80% of the business in Burma.

The relations between the Indians and Burmese had always been cordial, but for the Indo-Burmese riots in 1937. The riots took place mainly between the Burmese and the Indian Muslims, who are called Zerbadees, settled in Burma. Murders, loot and arson were committed on a fairly large scale. However as a result of earnest efforts on the parts of both the Indians and Burmese, cordial relations were restored.

Burmese themselves have been taking an active interest in the Indian politics. Men like Bhikshu Uttama who was very well known in Indian Nationalist circles was a great supporter of Iddia's fight for freedom.

### **In Malaya.**

Next to Burma, Malaya had a large population of Indians. Majority of the 800,000 Indians in Malaya had gone there as labourers, recruited by the Government. They were employed on rubber plantations, tin and lead mines, naval yards etc. There were a good number of Indians employed in the police service, and other civil services. There were others, working as watchmen

and Gwalas (milk vendors). A prominent section of Indians were engaged in business—big as well as small—and moneylending. Another prominent section consisted of intelligentsia like barristers, school teachers and so on.

In Malaya, however, Indians were a bit more politically conscious than their compatriots in Burma. There were two main causes of that. Firstly, the organisation of Indians in Malaya, and secondly, the British Government's attitude towards the Indian community.

Indians in Malaya had an Indian Association of Malaya, Indian Labour Organisation, the Indian Chamber of Commerce and so on.

There was also a branch of the Rama Krishna Mission, which was contributing a lot in educating the Indian Community in Malaya, and also enhancing the Indian culture there. The strongest body of Indians there was, of course, the Central Indian Association of Malaya. It is interesting to note that men like Shri N. Raghavan, and Dr. N. K. Menon had been presidents of this organisation.

Indian labourers in Malaya were called "Coolies". They came mostly from South India. Their condition was very poor. For, the capitalists and the middle men, created by the capitalists, were literally sucking the blood of these people. However, the Indian labourers organisation was trying to organise and educate these "Coolies", so as to enable them to press upon the authorities to redress their grievances. In this connection the events of 1940-41 are worth mentioning.

In the beginning of 1941, Indian Estate labourers in Klang, F. M. S. demanded an increase in their wages, as a result of enormous increase in the cost of living. The response was that of indifference from the authorities. Indian labourers, therefore, resorted to strike, the only legitimate weapon, recognized throughout the civilized world, for workers to settle their grievances. The British authorities resorted to shooting. To quote "The Future of Malaya" by a Malayan in the India Quarterly, July 1945, (P. 253), "The Malayan Government resorted to shooting an unarmed crowd, squatting round a European Manager's bungalow. This shooting was committed by units of the Indian Army, after an Australian Officer, who had been called to help, had declined to raise his guns on the people of the country they had come to protect." This shooting resulted in some death and injuries to many. This did not end there. Many Indian leaders like Shri R. H. Nathan were arrested and deported. Shri Nathan was later detained and then imprisoned in Vellore jail. Besides, prejudicial acts like ordering precensorship of the Indian owned English papers while the British owned press went free and other similar actions, were resorted to by the authorities against the Indian Community. As a result, a sort of suppressed antagonism against the British was produced in the minds of Indians.

### **Sri Raghavan.**

One of the prominent leaders of the Indian Community in Malaya, Shri N. Raghavan, hails from Malabar, South India, and belongs to the

Menon family. A Bar-at-law, Mr. Raghavan is a brilliant lawyer. He went to Malaya about 10 years before the out break of the East Asia war, and was living in Penang. He was President of the Indian Association and of the Central Indian Association of Malaya in 1937-38. During the same period he became the Director of "The Indian" Kwala Lampur. The Editor of this journal was Shri Neel Kanth Ayer, Chief Organisor of the Bombay Life Insurance Co., in Malaya, who later died in an aeroplane crash in March 1942, while enroute to Japan to attend the Tokyo Conference.

In May 1941, after the British authorities resorted to firing at the unarmed Indian labourers in Klong, Shri Raghvan came to India to present the case before Indian National leaders. He attended the Ramgarh Session of the Congress during his stay in India.

When the East Asia war started, Mr. Raghavan took a leading part in organising Indians in Malaya. In March, 1941, he proceeded to Tokyo as a member of Goodwill Mission to attend the Tokyo Conference.. When the Indian Independence League was organised, he became the first President of the all Malaya Indian Independence League. He attended the Bangkok Conference in Japan, 1942, as Leader of the Indian Delegation from Malaya. He was one of the five main speakers at the plenary session of the Conference. An eloquent speaker as he is, Mr. Raghavan very much impressed the audience by his speech. He exhorted them to respond to the call of "their Mother."

He was also elected the Chairman of the Subject Committee and took a leading part in conducting the deliberations of the Conference and drafting the historic Resolutions of the Conference. Shri Raghvan was elected one of the four members of the Council of Action.

When in December, 1942, the movement was in the grip of a crisis, Shri Raghvan resigned from the membership of the Council of Action. He later started residing in Penang, where he was only directing the affairs of the Swaraj Institute, which he had established there. Here young Indians were given political, technical and spiritual training.

After his resignation, for about one year Mr. Raghavan remained quiet. Then sometime early in 1944 Mr. Raghavan was taken into the movement and later appointed the Finance Minister of the Azad Hind Government.

### **In Thailand.**

THAILAND—the only “Independent”, and in fact a semi-colonial country in South East Asia, is a country, where the Indian and the Chinese culture and civilization meet. However the art, language, and culture of Thailand are influenced more by the Indian art, culture and language than those of China. This country has always been hospitable and sympathetic towards the Indian people and things Indian. Indians have been staying there for many decades, and before the East Asia War the population of the Indian Community was estimated at about 40,000. Most of them were residing in Bangkok, the Capital of the Country, Ayudhya, Chiangmai, Singora,

Rajburi, Nokon Paton and other main towns, but there was hardly any town or village in Thailand, where one could not come across an Indian.

Indians in Thailand, before the war, were mostly petty shopkeepers, only a few had a flourishing business, either in cloth or money-lending. Others were either Gwalas (milk vendors) or watchman. The business community mostly belonged to the Punjab, while Gwalas and watchmen from the U. P. mostly from the District of Gorakhpur.

For long Indians in Thailand did not have any organisation of their own. They were mostly at the mercy of the British Legation at Bangkok. The British never encouraged an Indian political body in that country. Only organisations like Hindu Sabha, Sikh Sabha, Anjuman a-Islam—all communal bodies—were allowed to function.

During the 1st World War of 1914-18, Indians in Thailand did do something of political nature. Men like late Lala Hardyal M. A. were helped to make their escapes good through Thailand. But afterwards Indian residents had to pay a very dear price for that. Many of them were insulted. One of them, S. Budha Singh, was transported for life to the Andamans. He later died there.

During the early thirties when Raja Mahendra Pratap visited Bangkok, Indian residents were instructed not to receive the Indian exile. The poor Indians had no other go but to yield before the "Royal Command" for, they were not organised.

Some time in 1935, a great Indian scholar visited Thailand and he not only felt the need of organising Indians in Thailand, but he poured himself heart and soul in the work and successfully organising them.

### **Late Swami Satyanand Puri.**

This great Indian was the late Swami Satyanand Puri. He belonged to the late Maharishi Rabindra Nath Tagore's International University—Shanti Niketan. Swamiji was invited by the Thai Government to deliver some lectures on Buddhism, some time in 1935. When Swamiji saw that Indians in Thailand were completely unorganised, he decided to stay on there. Besides Swamiji's profound knowledge of Indian philosophy and of Sanskrit language impressed the literary circles of Thailand so much that they influenced the then Thai Government to extend an invitation to the great Indian Scholar to remain in Thailand and help in the research of the Thai Language. Swamiji accepted the invitation and started the research work. Within six months the Indian monk mastered the language of Thailand. Later on he wrote many books in Thai language, the prominent being, the biographies of Mahatma Gandhi, Guru Govind Singh, Maharishi Tagore. He also made revolutionary amendments in the Thai language and brought it to a modern standard. To-day it is claimed that about 70% of the vocabulary of the Thai language is derived from Pali and Sanskrit, and the credit for this goes to Swamiji.

In 1939, Swamiji opened a Dharam Ashram in Bangkok. It was an Indo-Thai cultural



centre. The British did not like it, but they were helpless, for, first of all it was only a cultural institution, and secondly, the influential circles of the Thai Government were with Swamiji.

In 1940 Mr. A. M. Sahay, leader of the Indian community in Japan sent Mr Debanath Das, Secretary of the Association to Bangkok to contact Swamiji with the object of organising Indians in Thailand as a part of the programme of establishing an East Asia Indian organisation. As a result of the joint efforts of both Swamiji and Mr. Das a Thai-Bharat Culture Lodge was opened in Bangkok, under the leadership of Swamiji. Its object was to promote the cultural bonds uniting the two nations. The lodge had a library of its own

Soon after the outbreak of the East Asia War, an Indian National Council was organised in Bangkok, under the leadership of Swamiji. Later when Shri Rash Behari Bose arranged for the Tokyo Conference, Swamiji was also invited to attend. But unfortunately, the plane carrying Swamiji and three other Indian delegates crashed in the Ise Bay of Japan, and Indians in East Asia were deprived of the precious life of the great soul.

In memory of Swamiji, a trust under the name of Swami Satyanand Puri Trust and Library was established under the patronage and Chairmanship of H. R. H. Prince Von Vadyakon, Advisor to the Foreign Ministry of Thailand. ✕

### **In Indonesia, Philippines & China.**

Our compatriots living in Java, Sumatra, Borneo and other islands of the Indonesian

Archipelago were mostly labourers, who were employed in oil fields, forests, tea plantations and so on. Very few were engaged in business. In British Borneo there were a good number of them in Police service and also serving as watchmen.

In the Philippines, there were some Indian students, some had become domiciled citizens of this American Commonwealth and some others were acting as the agents of some business houses. They had an association of their own, which used to advocate for the cause of India, and also used to issue a bulletin regularly.

Indians in Indo-China were also mostly labourers, and a few money lenders—the Chatyars—from South India. There were a large number of Sindhis in Saigon, Hanoi and other big towns of Indo-China, and were carrying on a flourishing business. The condition of the Indian Community in this French territory was no better than of that of Indians in Malaya.

Indians in China were mostly residing in Macao, Canton, Hongkong, Shanghai, Nanking, Tientsin and other China sea ports. Majority of the Indian residents was in the police service, recruited by the British authorities. Next to policemen, was the number of watchmen. There were others employed in the civil service. In Shanghai and Hongkong big Indian business houses were also functioning.

In Hongkong, there was a big number of Indian students, a few of them taking medical course in the Hongkong University.

/ In Hongkong, there were many Indian clubs

and associations, but they had nothing to do with politics.

In Shanghai there was a Sikh Gurudwara and some other communal organisations organised by the local Indians.

In 1938, Mr. A. M. Sahay made an extensive tour of Manchuria, North China, Inner Mongolia and central China to study the effects of Sino-Japanese conflict at first hand and to study the conditions of Indians residing in those lands occupied by the Japanese. Sahay had for many years intimate connection with many nationalist leaders of China, formed in connection with his work regarding the Indian independence struggle. During his tours he organised the Indians in all those parts and acquainted with the necessity of keeping in touch with the Indian National struggle for freedom.

In Shanghai, the Indian community was the largest in numbers and there Sahay organised the Indian National Association of China which a good number of Indians joined.

The Indian National Association in Shanghai had Dr. Abraham as its first president. Later contact was established with Indians in Nankin and Hankow, where the branches of the Association were organised.

### **In Japan.**

Indians in Japan were not many in number. But they consisted of merchants and a few students. The majority of them were staying in Kobe and Yokohama while a few were in Tokyo and Osaka.

A glance at the organisational side of the Indian community in Japan, during the later thirties, would reveal that they were well organised in all respects.

On the social side, Indians had an India Club, an Indian Social Association, an Indo-Thai Society and a Bharat Mandir in Kobe, and an India Club in Yokohama. The standard of living of Indians in Japan was as high as that of Europeans or other foreigners in Japan. Hence their regular and respectable life.

On the business side, they had an Indian Chamber of Commerce, a recognized body by the Japanese Government. This body had to fight against many odds in safeguarding the interests of the Indian business men. And as it was a well organised body, it always succeeded in achieving its objects.

Although Indians went to Japan, many decades back, yet there was no political consciousness among them as a whole until 1924. They were mostly devoted to business. In the whole Indian population in Japan there was only one man who stood as the symbol of the Indian Nationalism, and he was the late Sri Rash Behari Bose. However it was in the early twenties that another young Indian, Anand Mohan Sahay, arrived in Japan with the message of the Indian National Congress, and vigorously started advocating the cause of Indian freedom. It was then that the Indian residents became politically conscious. It was as a result of this that in the thirties one could see that on the political side there were two organisations in Japan which can

be very well described as the nucleus of the Azad Hind movement which later developed in East Asia, and which has now made history. These were the Indian Independence League and the Indian National Association of Japan.

Before I go into the details of these two organisations I would like to mention here two more bodies—The Indian Students Association with its office in Tokyo, and the World Federation Centre of Raja Mahendra Pratap, veteran Indian exile.

The Indian students association was a body organised by Indian students in Tokyo. Its patron was the late Sri Rash Behari Bose. This was a sort of a club, mainly meant to promote the welfare of Indian students in Japan, the most prominent leaders of this organisation being the late Shri D. S. Deshpande and Shri Rama Murti.

The World Federation Centre at Kokulunji-Tokyo, can well be described by giving a life sketch of Raja M. Pratap.

### **Raja Mahendra Pratap.**

The man, who at the early age of 15, envisaged an idea of uniting all the religions of the World, and who invited the Chinese and the Tibetan delegations attending the Delhi Durbar of 1911, to visit him and accept him as leader of all the religions, has had a marvellous and adventurous career. He is no other than Raja Mahendra Pratap, who stayed at Kokubunji near Tokyo-Japan.

Raja Mahendra Pratap was the ruler of Brindaban Estate. He left India in the midst

of the first World War of 1914-18, leaving behind his wife and a young son. During the War, he travelled a lot, from Kabul to Berlin, covering almost all the countries on his way. He made acquaintances with the King of Afghanistan, Caliph Abdul Hamid of Turkey, Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany, and many other rulers of Europe. He had correspondence with the Czar and Tolstoy, with Lenin and Trotsky, and with many other leaders of Europe. It is since those days that Raja Mahendra Pratap has been preaching for the establishment of a comity of world nations. In one of his letters to the Raja, Lenin wrote, "Your World Federation idea and your God are nothing but Tolstoyism." Raja-ji still keeps this letter with him as a very precious document.

Sometime in 1918, Raja Mahendra Pratap founded his Provisional Government of Free India in Kabul. He himself was the President and one of his Ministers was Maulana Barkat Ali, holding the portfolio of foreign affairs. These were the same days when King Aman Ullah of Afghanistan attacked the North Western gates of India. It is said that Rajaji's free Indian Government also had something to do with that. But soon after that the World War I came to an end, and the dreams of Raja Mahendra Pratap did not realize.

After that defeat, Raja Mahendra Pratap started his wanderings. He visited the United States, Mexico, and then came to China. In China he remained for a fairly long time. He was declared a "criminal" by the British authorities. Hence his wanderings from place to place. He

had once, during these wanderings, lost his bag in China. It contained most of his precious documents. Afterwards he started wearing a long over-coat, with big pockets—to accommodate his precious documents.

In 1934, Rajaji went to Japan, and during the same year he came down to Bangkok by a Japanese steamer. The Indian Community in Bangkok had arranged a reception for the patriot Raja. But as soon as the steamer anchored at the harbour, the British Legation at Bangkok sent a note of warning to all the Indians in Bangkok not to go to the harbour to receive the Raja. The helpless Indian community, always at the mercy of the British authorities, had no other go but to yield before the British wishes. Only a handful of daring Indians went to receive their beloved Raja. The Thai Government, however under instructions from the British authorities, arrested Rajaji and kept him in prison for about two weeks, after which, he was allowed to proceed back to Japan by a Japanese steamer.

In 1936, Rajaji went to China. In Canton he was harrassed by the Chinese authorities, acting under instructions from the British authorities.

During the same year, Rajaji acquired some land at Kokubunji near Tokyo. In due course a fine little cottage and a beautiful garden sprang up. Rajaji also started issuing a weekly "Liberation". His hut was called the "Liberation Centre". This bulletin contained an account of most of his adventures, his correspondence, and his ideology advocating the establishment of a comity of nations.

Just before the out-break of the East Asia War, Raja Mahendra Pratap wrote to M. Joseph Stalin for the grant of a passport to enable him to visit Russia. But the Soviet Leader turned a deaf ear to this exiled prince. In those very days Raja Mahendra Pratap, late Shri Rash Behari Bose and Shri A. M. Sahay sent a joint memorandum to the Congress leaders here, warning them against the expected out-break of another world war. The main initiative was taken in this respect by A. M. Sahay. When the East Asia War broke out, a Committee of the three was formed with late Sri D. S. Deshpande as an additional member, to decide as to what course Indians in East Asia were to take.

The Committee, however, did not succeed, for, they could not decide as to who should be the leader. As a result Raja Mahendra Pratap withdrew from active politics. He, however, told the Japanese Government that he was not their ally. Hence he should be given a monthly allowance of one thousand yen, as the Indian Community in Japan was no longer in a position to support him. The Japanese Government agreed. But after one month they wanted to reduce the amount to one half. Rajaji did not agree to that and refused to accept even a single yen. The Japanese did not like his ways, so they interned him at his residence. Throughout the War, Raja Mahendra Pratap remained an internee. And when the Americans went to Japan last year, they too arrested him, as a "war criminal". What a criminal act it was! It was only in March this year that the Americans



released Rajaji.

After his release Raja Mahendra Pratap remained at his cottage at Kokubunji near Tokyo. For many months he was not allowed by the British to come back to his motherland. He has been a fighter for freedom, and the British and their allies, who claim to be the champions of freedom, democracy and what not, considered it dangerous to allow him to come back to India! It is only now that after several representations, the British authorities have allowed this exiled Prince to come back to his motherland. The Raja is now amongst us.

Coming back to the other two political organisations of the Indians in Japan, it is quite appropriate to say that the organisation of Indian Independence League was synonymous with the activities of the well-known Indian exile in Japan—the late Shri Rash Behari Bose.

### **The late Shri Rash Behari Bose.**

Rash Behari Bose, the founder of the Indian Independence League and the Indian freedom movement in East Asia, will go down in the history of India's struggle for independence as one who laid down his life while striving to achieve this sacred end. Bose hailed from Chandarnagar (French India) near Calcutta. Born in 1880, he was connected from his early youth with the extremist organisations of India—organisations which were called terrorist. And it is a well known fact that terrorism and anarchism are the first symptoms of nationalism. Especially in a slave country like India as was the case in





*Netaji arrives in Singapore,  
2nd July, 1943.*

Russia, it played a major part in awakening the slumbering masses.

Rash Behari Bose became more active after the Bengal Partition. And if one holds that he was a product of the Partition, one is justified. He moved about throughout India during the early years of this century in his earnest zeal to organise the youth of India into some militant organisation. Mostly he was in the Punjab with his headquarters at Lahore.

The year 1911, was a momentous one in his life. The Delhi Durbar was to be held and Bose decided to take such a step as would make the people of India astir. On 10th October, when the procession of the Viceroy, was being conducted, a bomb exploded just near the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge. The Lord escaped death. The whole show was disturbed. The special police and the C. I. D. made terrible search for the "culprit". Their target was of course Bose, but Bose was not to be caught. He dodged and escaped. The search continued throughout India. Bose had many a miraculous escape. There are legends in the Punjab regarding these escapes.

In 1914, however, Rash Behari Bose made good his escape to Japan. When the British secret service came to know about this, pressure was brought upon the then Japanese Government, which was not strong in those days and was virtually under the sway of the British Ambassador in Tokyo, to hand over the "culprit" to the British. After several representations made by the British Ambassador in Tokyo on behalf of the Government of India, the then Government of

Japan agreed to search for and hand over the "culprit" to the British within three days' time. When the Nationalist circles in Japan and those who were strongly resenting the white rule over almost all parts of Asia, came to know that the Japanese Government had yielded before the British demands, they decided not to allow Bose being handed over to the British. Hence at the crucial movement appeared a man on the political arena and asked Japanese Government not to yield before the British demands. His appeal however fell upon deaf ears. At last that man who was none else than Mitsuro Toyoma, leader of Japan's Black Dragon Party—"Kidnapped" Bose and helped him in remaining under ground. The British authorities, with the help of their Scotland Yard, could neither trace out Bose, nor could they, inspite of their sway over the then Japanese Government, get hold of him.

For six long years Rash Behari Bose remained an "U. G." He however did not waste these years. During these six years he learnt the Japanese language, the Japanese ways and so on. Some time in 1920, Bose became a Japanese citizen. A Japanese noble, Baron Soma, offered the hand of his daughter to Bose. The "Nakamura" is a hotel in Shinjiku, the busiest quarters in Tokyo. This hotel was opened by Bose after he got married there. There Indian meals were available before the last war. Mr. Bose has a son, Renzuki Bose, and a daughter, Tetsuku, from his Japanese wife. Young Bose was a Captain in the Japanese Army during the war. Mrs. Bose died in early thirties.

In 1921 Rash Behari Bose established the Indian Independence League. The object of this organisation was to introduce things Indian—both political and cultural—to the Japanese people. He also started a magazine, both in English and Japanese, describing the conditions in India. Many books and pamphlets also were written by Bose in this connection.

The late Mr. Bose was also looking after the interests of Indians in Japan. Particularly the Indian student community had a special attention for the old man. His most trusted and able lieutenant was late Shri D. S. Deshpande. Deshpande had been in Japan since 1930, and ever since his arrival in Japan he worked along with the old man in promoting the goodwill between the Japanese and the Indian people. Shri Deshpande later accompanied Bose to Southern Asia. Deshpande was reported to have met his untimely and much lamented death while travelling to Japan in early 1945 by a steamer which was torpedoed and sunk by an American submarine. Deshpande was one of the most brilliant and sincere workers for the cause of India.

When the East Asia War broke out, Shri Rash Behari Bose had talks with the then Japanese war lords. He made speeches over the Tokyo Radio exhorting his countrymen at home to make good of the golden opportunity the war had provided them, to free their country. In March, 1942 Bose invited goodwill missions representing Indians in all parts of East Asia, to attend a conference at Tokyo. This conference was held on 28th March, 1942. At this

conference it was decided to hold another conference at Bangkok, the capital of Thailand, where representatives from the Indian National Army, founded by General Mohan Singh, and from Indian civilians throughout East Asia would gather to decide as to what Indians should do.

Rash Behari Bose, accompanied by ten other Indians (the writer was one of them) left Japan on 1st May, 1942. The proposed Conference was held at Bangkok on 15th June 1942. 120 Indian delegates were present there. Sri Rash Behari Bose was elected President. A Council of Action of four was also elected to work under him.

Soon after the Indian Independence League was officially established with its Headquarters at Bangkok, Mr. Bose started touring all parts of East Asia. He made exhaustive tours of Thailand, Malaya, Burma, Java, Sumatra, and other places. His object was to give the message of the League to every Indian in East Asia wherever he might be.

Besides he addressed radio messages to Indians at home, and appeals to leaders of all schools of thought in the country. He pleaded for a united action against the common foe, and offered the services of the Indian Independence League, which was the mouthpiece of all Indians in East Asia.

As a public speaker, Bose was an ordinary man. Rather he did not advocate public speaking. He liked to work. He was a sincere and earnest worker, and his patriotism was unquestionable.

tionable. The December (1942) crisis was rather an unfortunate affair. But the perseverance and steadfastness with which the late Rash Behari Bose faced all the circumstances and kept up the movement deserve not only admiration but also praise.

Although Shri Rash Behari Bose differed from Gandhiji as far as violence and non-violence are concerned, yet he had immense faith in the leadership of the Mahatma. It may be recalled, that in June 1942, just after the Bangkok conference, Rash Behari Bose, had a telephone talk with Sri Subhas Chandra Bose, who was then in Berlin. During that talk both the old and young Boses, on suggestion of the old man, agreed to accept the leadership of Mahatmaji in their fight for freedom from abroad.

In April, 1943, Mr. Rash Behari Bose left his headquarters at Singapore for Japan. The rumours were prevalent that Subhas Babu was due in East Asia. Actually speaking, most of the Indians were only having their hopes with Subhas. The movement was at that time at its lowest ebb. And those who were still in the movement, remained there with the hope that Subhas was to arrive in East Asia any day.

At long last, the news came that Subhas Chandra Bose had arrived in Tokyo on the 13th of June, 1943.

A conference of representatives of Indians throughout East Asia was called for. It was scheduled to be held on the 4th of July, 1943. Rash Behari Bose accompanied by the dynamic leader Subhas arrived in Singapore on the 2nd.



On the 4th an historic Conference was held at the Cathay, Singapore. During this conference, Rash Behari Bose delivered a long speech, and among many other things said, "I have brought a Present for you and that is Subhas.....I beg you to relieve me of the heavy responsibility of the President-hip of the Indian Independence League, and I also suggest the name of your hero—Subhas Chandra Bose, as the next President of the League." There he handed over his duties to abler and younger hands. Subhas Chandra Bose, after accepting the responsibilities, placed upon his shoulders, requested the old man to be his Supreme Adviser.

Sometimes at the end of July, 1943, the old man came to Bangkok, where I saw him. I had been his Secretary during the Bangkok conference and after. He told me, "Sardar, I am too old now. It is now the young folks who are to carry on the task." The old man looked very weak. His chronic diabetes had been troubling him too much. Thereafter he went to Tokyo. Doctors advised him to take rest in some health resort.

The old man however, remained in Japan, as he was too weak to take an active part in the political affairs.

In early January, 1944, there were on one side news of our armies advancing towards Burma and towards Indo-Burma border, and on the other were news about the condition of our Supreme Adviser worsening day by day. His end came nearer. He was however glad that the seed which he had planted had

grown into a big tree. There was a free Indian Government, recognized by nine world powers. There was our Army advancing towards the citadel of our foe. And there was our territory—the Andamans and the Nicobars—where the tricolour was majestically fluttering.

One night—it was the 21st of January, 1944—we were listening to the radio, when the B. B. C. announced, “We have just received the news that Mr. Rash Behari Bose, Supreme Adviser to Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose’s Provisional Government of Free India had died. Mr. Bose was connected with Lord Hardinge Bomb Case and has been in Japan for over 25 years. We received this news with great remorse. One of us said, “Bose is dead, Long Live Bose (Subhas).” Thus ended the life of a man who strived and strived for the cause of Mother India.

The old man was no more: He died at the time when he was sure that freedom was just round the corner. His only desire which remained unfulfilled was that he eagerly awaited the moment when he could be back in his motherland.

**Sri Anand Mohan Sahay,  
And**

**The Indian National Association of Japan.**

The other political organisation of Indians in Japan was the Indian National Association of Japan. It was founded by Anand Mohan Sahay.

Sahay belongs to Bhagalpore, Bihar. While he was a student of the Medical School at Patna,

he joined the Non-cooperation movement of 1920, and courted imprisonment in that connection. Later he was made a secretary to Dr. Rajendra Prasad. At the Gaya Congress held in 1922, he was one of the secretaries of the Reception Committee. He was also elected Secretary to the All India Social Conference also held at Gaya.

In May, 1923, Mr Sahay left for America with a view to complete his medical studies there. He, however, could only proceed upto Japan, due to lack of passport facilities. He, therefore, decided to stay in the land of the Rising Sun, where he came into contact with the late Shri, Rash Behari Bose. Soon, he started contributing articles about India to the Japanese press. He also did side—business to earn his living. In August 1926, he attended the All Asiatic Conference held at Nagasaki.

In November 1926, Sahay sailed for India. Visiting Hongkong, Bangkok and Malaya, on his way, he reached India in January 1927. After marrying Smt. Sati Devi, a niece of the late Deshbandu C. R. Das in April, Mr. Sahay again left for Japan in September, the same year. After returning to Japan, he started preparing the field for opening a branch of the Indian National Congress.

During the year 1929, Sri Sahay arranged a meeting of the Indian community of Kobe in honour of Raja Mahendra Pratap. It was at this meeting that he announced the opening of the Japan Branch of the Congress, with himself as the representative. A number of young Indians joined there and then. In 1930, Sahay started

his journal, the "Voice of India", which was the organ of the Congress Branch.

During 1931—33 Sahay established the India Lodge—a home for the Indian students. It was during the same year, that he established the Indo-Japanese Association, and organised series of lectures on the problems of India, in different parts of Japan.

In 1936, Mr. Sahay organised the celebration of the Congress Silver Jubilee, on a large scale. It was in 1936, when the Congress amended its Constitution as regards its branches abroad, all the foreign branches of the Congress were dissolved. The Japan Branch of the Congress was re named as the Indian National Committee of Japan, and it was assured cooperation from the A I C. C. Although the name was changed, yet the work of the Committee was the same, i. e. to propagate the cause of India led by the Indian National Congress. The credit of acquainting the Japanese people with the mass nationalist movement in India, led by the Indian National Congress, goes to Sahay. He was the first Indian in Japan, to write a book on New and Rising India. The name of the book was "India", and it was published both in English and Japanese, in 1939.

During the year 1938, Sahay visited various places in China and Manchuria, including Nanking and Shanghai. In Shanghai and other places as already described, Indians, who were mostly watchmen and policemen, were organised by Sahay into one Indian National Association of China.

In 1939, Mr. Sahay was invited by the Manila University for a lecture tour in the Philippines. The British authorities however did not provide him with the necessary passport facilities, and he could not comply with the invitation of the Filippinoes.

During the year 1940, the Indian National Committee was reorganised and re-named as the Indian National Association of Japan. Mr. Sahay, was its President, while Mr. D. N. Das its General Secretary. During the same year, when Mr. Das was sent to Thailand, the writer was elected as the General Secretary of the Association.

Besides its periodical, the "Voice of India" the Association used to issue from time to time pamphlets depicting the history of India's National struggle for freedom. Mr. Sahay had direct correspondence with the A. I. C. C., and all the pamphlets published and supplied by the A. I. C. C., used to be reproduced by the Association both in English and Japanese.

In 1940, he wrote another book, which appeared in the Japanese language. It was "The Dooms Day of the British Empire".

Immediately after the European War broke out, Mr. Sahay and Raja Mahendra Pratap started propagating in favour of taking advantage of the situation, for the freedom of India. At the suggestion of Sahay, a Trio Committee, consisting of himself, Raja Mahendra Pratap, and the late Shri Rash Behari Bose, was formed. However, the Committee could not last long. When the Tokyo Conference was about to be

convened he was requested to take the lead, but he refused and suggested the name of Shri Rash Behari Bose for the same. Later on he attended the Bangkok Conference as the leader of the Indian Delegation from Japan. He was the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee of the Conference. At the formation of the Indian Independence League Headquarters, he was given the Charge of Publications.

✓ After the arrival of Netaji, Mr. Sahay was appointed the Overseas Secretary at the Headquarters of the I. I. L. at Shonan, and concurrently Chairman of the I. I. L. Thailand Territorial Committee, at Bangkok. Later he was appointed Secretary to the Provisional Government of Azad Hind, with Ministerial rank. He attended the Greater East Asia Conference held in Tokyo in November 1943 along with Netaji. In 1944, he was made the Secretary General of the I. I. L. Headquarters. At the end of 1944, Sahay went on a tour of all the I. I. L. branches throughout East Asia, as Inspector-General of Branches. He returned to Bangkok in March 1945, along with his eldest daughter, Miss Asha, who later joined the Rani of Jhansi Regiment

Sahay was in Hanoi, Indo-China, on a special mission, when the Japanese surrendered. He was arrested there, at the end of December last, along with some other Azad Hind Ministers and high-ranking officers. He was then brought to Singapore jail, where he was released in June, this year. He returned to his motherland after 19 years, in July this year.

## CHAPTER III

### East Asia War—and Spontaneous Upsurge of Indian Freedom Movement

On 8th December, 1941, Japan declared war against the Anglo-Americans. Within a few hours of the out-break of East Asia War, the Japanese armed forces brought a havoc over the Anglo-Americans. Pearl Harbour was smashed. Hongkong. Singapore, Manila and other places were bombed, and Britain's wonderful warships were sent to the bottom of the sea. Throughout East Asia, astounding victories welcomed the Japanese. The whole world was wonderstruck.

Within a day of the out-break of the East Asia War, the International and British and American Sections of Shanghai were occupied by the Japanese. By 12th of December, Thailand became Japan's ally. By 25th of December, Hongkong fell. By the end of 1941, a major part of Malaya was in the hands of the Japanese, and Burma had been invaded. On 15th of February, 1942, Singapore, Britain's Gibraltar of the East, a fortress which took 20 years to build and two weeks to fall—collapsed, and the British surrendered unconditionally. Meanwhile the armed campaign in Burma, Indonesia and the Philippines continued. By May, Burma was fully occupied by the Japanese and by July, the whole of East Asia came under the shadow of the Rising Sun.

It appeared at that time as if Japan was

## **EAST ASIA WAR—AND SPONTANEOUS UPSURGE OF 93 INDIAN FREEDOM MOVEMENT**

going to conquer and advance. Japan's power seemed to be impregnable.

It was under these circumstances that East Asia saw the birth of a new force, a movement among Indians throughout East Asia. The reasons for that are many. They include Japan's strength and Japan's encouraging attitude, Britain's dwindling power, rapidly changing situation within India, the urge to make use of the war and thus help in supplementing the freedom movement within India and so on. The fact, however, remains that the movement was spontaneous, whatever the causes might be.

### **In Japan**

On 8th of December, 1941, the day of the outbreak of East Asia War, the late Shri Rash Behari Bose broadcasted from Tokyo a radio address to the Indian nation, and to the Indians in the Far East. In this message, Mr. Bose asked his countrymen to make full use of the opportunity provided to them by the war, and thus win freedom of their country. He also told them that Japan was their friend and would extend all possible aid to them if they organised themselves to achieve their purpose.

Also on 8th December, in the afternoon, the late Sri Rash Behari Bose, Sri A. M. Sahay, and other Indians assembled at the Rainbow Grill, Tokyo, and decided to start a campaign for the independence of India.

On 26th December, Sri Sahay convened a meeting of the representatives of the Indian community in Japan at the Railway Hotel,



Tokyo, to organise the community for India's fight for freedom. At that meeting he proposed the name of Shri Rash Behari Bose to be the leader of the movement and promised to offer his whole-hearted co-operation.

After the 26th of December, both Bose and Sahay had interviews with the high-ranking officials of the Japanese War Ministry. In January 1942, however, Sahay accompanied by the late Shri D. S. Deshpande left for Shanghai in order to abolish the Indian National Association there and to organise the Indian Independence League instead. On his return, Sahay found that the Japanese were interfering in the affairs of the Indian Independence Movement. He therefore refused to co-operate with the Japanese and the late Sri Bose, and came into conflict with the Japanese military authorities.

Towards the end of April 1942, however, on the definite assurance from the Japanese that the Indian Independence Movement would be the sole concern of Indians, Sahay agreed to co-operate with Sri Bose.

### In Shanghai

When the war in East Asia broke out the Japanese marines landed at Shanghai and upied the International, British, American and other settlements in Shanghai. The Japanese attitude towards the Indian community was friendly. This and other reasons encouraged the Indian community to organise themselves. Already an Indian National Association, founded by A. M. Sahay existed there. Besides, Baba

H. S Usman of the Kamagata Maru fame also arrived there.

In the beginning of January, 1942, Sri A. M. Sahay and Sri D. S. Deshpande came there from Japan. The writer also joined them there, and extensive activities started to organise the Indian Community into one body. On the 26th of January, 1942,—Independence Day—a public meeting was held at the Young Men's Club, and one body under the name of the Indian Independence League was formed. All other organisations including the Indian National Association were dissolved. Sri M. S. Doshi took the lead of the Indian Community there.

It is worth mentioning here that Sri Nanak Chand Anand was, after the termination of hostilities, arrested by the Chinese military authorities in Shanghai last November. It is only recently that he was reported to have been released.

Besides, Sri A. M. Sahay also arranged for a regular broadcast programme and made arrangements with the X G R S Radio Station at Shanghai. From this station the Azad Hind Radio programme used to be put up regularly at 8.00 p. m. every day, for one hour. This was the first Radio Station in East Asia from where an Indian programme under Indian management started regularly. It may be recalled that Mr. Sahay successfully negotiated with the publicity department of the German Embassy in Shanghai to start an Indian programme to promote the Indian cause.

### In Hongkong

Hongkong fell on Christmas Day—25th December, 1941. Besides the civilian Indian population, there were about 7,000 Indian soldiers of the British Army, who became prisoners of war at the hands of the Japanese.

Soon after the Japanese occupation, the Indian Community started organising itself, the student community taking a leading part in the movement. It was on the 26th of January, the Independence Day, that at a mass meeting of Indians, it was decided to organise an Indian Independence League. Dr. P. N. Sharma, a 9th year medical student of the Hongkong University, became the leader of the Indians in Hongkong and Kowloon. Besides organising the Indian Community on political lines, he also undertook the task of distributing food stuff to the starving Indians there. Hongkong being an island, the food problem became very acute during the hostilities and after the Japanese occupation. Therefore, the steps taken by the I. I. L. in this connection proved very useful and humanitarian.

Dr. Sharma did not come into much lime-light. However, he also had to fight against the Japanese many a time. On several occasions the life of this young freedom fighter was in danger because of his independent spirit and undaunted courage. Whatever he did, and in whatever way, he conducted the affairs of the League, he did with the sole objective of making the I. I. L., free from any foreign control. Dr. Sharma also conducted the free India Radio at Hongkong. No interference, from the Japanese





***General Mohan Singh, Founder of the  
I. N. A., seen with Capt. Dhillon.***

side was ever tolerated by him in this sphere as well.

Other leaders of the Indian community in Honkong included Mr. D. M. Khan, who later became an Advisor to the Provisional Government of Azad Hind, Dr. Naidu and Mr. P. A. Krishna, secretary of the I. I. L. in Honkong. There was another Indian business man, who took quite a leading part in the movement. This man claimed to have worked for 15 years in the Congress in India, but there in Honkong he proved to be a hindrance in the way of independent running of the movement. His hindrance, however, did not bear fruit. Dr. Sharma and his colleagues were too intelligent to be taken in by such ambitious demagogues.

Another colleague of the Doctor was the late Zahur Ahmed—formerly an Indian Army soldier. This young soldier joined Dr. Sharma, soon after the termination of the hostilities, and helped him a lot in organising the community. Later on, when Dr. Sharma was called to the Headquarters of the Indian Independence League at the end of 1942, Mr. Zahur Ahmed also accompanied him. Zahur afterwards came to Burma, from where he infiltrated into India at the end of 1943, as a member of an advance party of the I. N. A. In India, however, Zahur was arrested, and branded as "enemy agent". This brave son of India was hanged sometime in 1944. Such patriots and sincere workers for the cause of India's freedom as the late Mr. Zahur Ahmed, have done a lot in taking the

country nearer to its goal of independence.

The organisation of the Indian Independence League in Hongkong, and the news of the formation of an Indian National Army in Malaya under General Mohan Singh had far reaching effects over the Indian POWS in Hongkong. They also started organising themselves into a volunteer corps, under the leadership of Capt. Hakim Khan. Many of the soldiers offered themselves as volunteers for the proposed Indian Army of Liberation. Similarly, the small Indian community at Canton and Macao also organised itself into an Indian Independence League, of their own.

### **In Indonesia, Philippines and Indo-China**

The Japanese campaign in Indonesia came to a conclusion early in January, 1942. The Indian residents there followed with keen interest the radio addresses delivered by the late Sri Rash Behari Bose from Tokyo. They also watched the events of great importance happening throughout East Asia. The Japanese attitude towards the Indian community was better than their attitude towards other communities. This and many other factors induced the Indian community in Indonesia to organise itself. Hence an organisation with the same name or the other sprang up in all the islands of the Malayian Archipelago. Mr. Haq organised the community in Java, Mr. Malvani in Sumatra and V. V. N. K. Pillai in Borneo.

resistance. Hence it was not until May, 1942, when the Indian Community could organise itself.

In Indo-China, however, the French overlords did not tolerate any Indian organisation. This was the only place in East Asia, where Indians remained unorganised as late as 1944.

### In Thailand

When the Japanese declared war on the 8th of December, 1941, the Japanese troops were right in Indo-China, and on the borders of Indo-China and Thailand. Hence they had no difficulty in invading the Thai territory. But after a 6 hours' resistance, Thailand became a Japanese ally, and while agreeing to Japan's demands to allow Japanese troops to pass through Thailand, Thailand remained more or less "independent."

The Indian community there had already an organisation, the Thai-Bharat Cultural Lodge, under the leadership of Swami Satyanand Puri. Soon after the out-break of the East Asia war, an Indian National Council was formed under the Chairmanship of Swamiji, with Sri Debnath Das as the Secretary. A volunteer corps was also founded. The Indian community especially the Gwalas, hailing mostly from U. P., responded to the call enthusiastically. Many prominent men like S. Ishar Singh, Pt. Raghunath Shastri, Maulvi Mohd. Akbar, A. Snukla and others started taking a leading part in the movement. A free India radio programme was also started over the Bangkok Broadcasting Station, and messages



were sent to the Indian leaders at home requesting them to take full advantage of the situation created by the war.

Another enthusiastic young Indian who took a very leading part in organising the Indian community in Thailand and afterwards in Malaya as well, was the late Giani Pritam Singh. He organised an Independent League of India in Bangkok. It was not a rival organisation to the Indian National Council, but had a different line of action. It was the late Giani who later contacted the Indian troops in Malaya, and also met General Mohan Singh. Whatever his means might have been Giani Pritam Singh was a sincere patriot and an enthusiastic worker. He had a band of young, earnest and death-defying Indians along with him, who worked in their own way to achieve the object of the country's freedom.

The Indian National Council and the Independent League of India were later absorbed into one organisation, and still later merged into the Indian Independence League of East Asia.

### In Malaya

The position of the 800,000 Indians in Malaya has already been described in the previous chapter. Indian civilians were deadly against the British, but the Indian troops and especially the officers were even more dissatisfied. There was a lot of colour prejudice, as in the case of the order prohibiting Indian officers from using the swimming pool of the Singapore Swimming Club, though they were later allowed membership after

much agitation. The picture of this discrimination has been very nicely drawn by Maj. General Shah Nawaz Khan, in his statement which he gave before the Court Martial during his trial. He said that what he had not been able to understand was the difference of treatment between an Indian and a British soldier. "So far fighting was concerned there was no difference. The Indian soldier stood his ground and fought to the last, why then ~~there~~ should be so much difference in their pay, allowance, food, and ~~living~~ ~~condition~~ ? It seemed to me completely unjust," declared General Shah Nawaz Khan.

Among the men, as well, there was a feeling that they were not getting a fair deal. Hence when the Japanese invaded Malaya, the Indian troops, first of all could not fight well due to lack of air protection. Secondly they had no mind to fight. Every one of them was thinking, "What are we fighting for?" And ~~that mental uneasiness was the beginning of the Indian National Army.~~

Besides, the Japanese forces advanced with lightning speed. And by the 31st of January 1942, the battle of Malaya came to an end. By that time a large number of Indian troops had already been made POWS. By that time also General Mohan Singh had already started organising an armed force with the objective of saving the lives of Indian prisoners of war and furthering the cause of India's freedom.

On 15th February 1942, Singapore fell and the next day all the Indian soldiers numbering over 50,000 were collected at the Farrer Park,

Singapore, and officially handed over by Col. Hunt, representing the British C-in-C., to Maj. Fujiwara, representative of the Japanese C-in-C. Col. Hunt addressed the soldiers and said, "The British and Indian soldiers in Singapore have surrendered to the Japanese Imperial Army and we are all prisoners. I, on behalf of the crown, am handing over you all to Maj. Fujiwara, the Japanese representative. From now on you belong to the Japanese Army and you will obey their orders as you have been obeying ours."

During the same meeting Major Fujiwara delivered a speech and explained the Japanese attitude towards India and the Indian POWS. He said, "We do not consider yourselves to be prisoners of war. As far as we are concerned you are free and as such I hand you over to Capt. Mohan Singh. You will obey his orders as if you were in our charge."

Capt. Mohan Singh, taking over the charge of all the Indian troops spoke a few words. During his speech he expressed that the Indian soldiers had been let down by the British. He also exhorted them to organise and fight for India's freedom.

There started the organisation of the Indian National Army.

On the 17th of February 1942, some prominent Indians of Singapore including Sri S. C. Goho and Sri K. P. K. Menon were invited by Maj. Fujiwara of the Japanese Headquarters. The Japanese Major talked to them many things, and said that it was a golden opportunity for Indians to strike for their country's freedom. He also

told them that Japan was prepared to give all ~~out~~<sup>internal</sup> aid to Indians in achieving their end. Maj. Fujiwara also explained that Indians, being technically enemy nationals as they were British subjects, would not be treated as such by the Japanese through out East Asia, since they realised that Indians were not British subjects of their own accord. He also suggested the formation of an organisation of Indians in Malaya.

The Indian dignitaries told Maj. Fujiwara that they would consider his suggestions and meet him again in a few days.

Later on the Indian representatives told Fujiwara that they would like to see Sri N. Raghawan, President of the Central Indian Association of Malaya, and other Indian leaders from different parts of Malaya before coming to a decision. Hence the Indian leaders met in Singapore on 9th and 10th of March 1942.

Meanwhile, an invitation had come from Sri Rash Behari Bose for representatives from Malaya and Thailand to go to Tokyo for a conference. The meeting of the Indian leaders of Malaya was also attended by some representatives from Thailand. The Japanese wanted that these Indian leaders should send special delegations to Tokyo, but the Indian leaders, decided, against the Japanese wishes, to send only good-will missions from Malaya and Thailand, to the proposed Tokyo Conference. The reason was that the Indian representatives from Malaya and Thailand did not want to commit themselves to any course of action.

## General Mohan Singh

The founder and father of the Indian National Army, General Mohan, is a young man of about 35. He hails from the village of Ugoke in the district of Sialkot, Punjab. He joined the Indian Army sometime in early thirties, and was selected for the Military Academy in 1934, from where he came out as a Lieutenant. He was posted to overseas services and was sent to Malaya in March, 1941, along with his unit, the 1/14th Punjab Regiment.

When the East Asia war broke out. Captain Mohan Singh's battalion was posted on the Jitra Front, on the Thai-Malayan border. He fought on the British side dutifully and bravely, till the evening of 11th December, when a Japanese tank unit penetrated into his battallion, which was as a result, completely disorganised. Capt. Mohan Singh and a few of his companions remained in the jungles and were later joined by Capt. Mohd. Akram, also of the same unit.

It was at that crucial time when Capt. Mohan Singh carefully thought over the situation. Various questions, like, "What are we fighting for?", "Is it not that Britian is using us in the name of freedom while keeping us slaves?" started cropping up in his fertile mind. This was a critical moment for the young Captain. Besides, he was in such a position that he had to surrender before the Japanese, with whom he had no connections what-so-ever, not had he even met one before. To his surprise, Major Fujiwara, the man who had made him prisoner, told him that he was not a prisoner, but a free

man. Fujiwara also told him that he would get all possible aid from the Japanese, if he organised a force to fight for India's Independence.

After carefully studying the situation, Mohan Singh came to the conclusion that whether he liked it or not, the Japanese were preparing to invade India. Hence he joined the Japanese with the objectives of saving the lives of Indian prisoners of war, organising a force to fight for India's freedom and lastly to save the lives of Indian civilians in East Asia.

Mohan Singh is a fine orator. Hence he succeeded in collecting the strugglers and organising them into a patriotic force, determined to do or die only for India. He had a plan of organising a force of over 200,000 soldiers, ready to fight for the country's cause.

By the time Singapore fell, Mohan Singh had raised a patriotic force of over 8,000 soldiers. During this very period he had met Giani Pritam Singh from Thailand.

After the fall of Singapore, Major Fujiwara handed all the Indian POWS over to Capt. Mohan Singh. Mohan Singh then called a meeting of all the senior officers of the Indian troops and they unanimously elected him as their leader.

As a leader of the Indian POWS, who had volunteered themselves for the cause of India's freedom, Mohan Singh first attended the Tokyo Conference and then the Bangkok Conference. It was at the Bangkok Conference that Mohan Singh was appointed the General Officer

Commanding of the Indian National Army. Mohan Singh, meanwhile, lost a great friend and associate in Capt. Mohd. Akram Khan, who died as a result of a plane crash while en route to Tokyo. After Akram Khan's death, Col. N. S. Gill became the chief advisor to Gen. Mohan Singh. Another of his companion was Col. G. Q. Gilani, who was elected a member of the Council of Action at the Bangkok Conference.

It is interesting to note that out of about 55,000 Indian POWS, about 45,000 volunteered themselves for the I. N. A. But the Japanese did not allow Mohan Singh to raise an Army of more than 15,000 strong.

Still General Mohan Singh continued to train his army as vigorously as possible. But the attitude of the Japanese was becoming day to day suspicious. And the hitch came when Mohan Singh demanded clarification of certain points and also amplification of some of the resolutions passed at the Bangkok Conference. It resulted in what is called the December Crisis. Col. N. S. Gill was arrested by the Japanese on charges which had no basis. This was followed by a demand of his immediate release by Mohan Singh. When that demand was not complied with, all the four members of the Council of Action resigned, General Mohan Singh through a special order of the Day disbanded the Indian National Army. He was arrested by the Japanese on 29th December, 1942.

For nearly three long years, the founder of the I. N. A. remained in Japanese Camps. He was

EAST ASIA WAR—AND SPONTANEOUS UPSURGE 107  
OF INDIAN FREEDOM MOVEMENT

released from the Japanese prison in Sumatra in August, last year, and then brought to India, where he was imprisoned by the British in the Red Fort. It was only in May, that this brave son of India was released.

6



## **CHAPTER IV**

### **From Tokyo to Bangkok**

In the last chapter it has been clearly shown that the outbreak of the East Asia War saw a new and healthy consciousness in the Indian Community through out East Asia. The Japanese war slogan of "Asia for Asiatics" attracted the Indian Community the most. And wherever the Japanese forces went, Indians there organised themselves into some organisation or the other. Another thing which is evidenced in the last chapter is that all the organisations of Indians in East Asia sprang up spontaneously, and that they were isolated organisations and had no connections whatsoever, with one another. There was of course the unity of objective and purpose. Moreover they organised themselves under the one banner—the National Tricolour of India. The only thing lacking in all the organisations was a united front and the unity of action.

It was at this stage, that the late Sri Rash Behari Bose, along with his frequent broadcast calls to his countrymen, decided to call a conference of the Indian representatives in Tokyo.

### **The Tokyo Conference**

Invitations were sent to all the organisations in all the territories under the Japanese occupation to send their representatives to Tokyo to attend a conference, which was held from

28th to 30th March, 1942, at Sanno Hotel Tokyo. Altogether 16 Indian representatives were present at this Conference. It was while proceeding to this conference that a plane carrying Swami Sat Nand Puri and Giani Pritam Singh from Bangkok, and Capt. Mohd. Akram Khan and Sri Nilkanth Iyer from Malaya crashed in the Isle Bay in Japan resulting in the untimely death of these Indian leaders. It was the first sacrifice on behalf of the Indians in East Asia to the Goddess of Freedom.

Those attending included Capt. Mohan Singh and Col. N. S. Gill representing the Indian POWS in Malaya, Sri N. Raghavan, Sri S. E. Goho, and K. P. K. Menon. members of the goodwill mission from Malaya, Sri D. M. Khan and Mr. Mallick from Hongkong, Sri H. S. Usman and Sri B. Bobby from Shanghai, Sri D. S. Deshpande and a few others from Japan. Sri Rash Behari Bose presided. At that conference Mr. Sahay did not participate, because of fundamental differences shown in detail previously, he did not accept the invitation to take part in the conference.

At this Conference it was decided that as the time was opportune, an Independence Movement among Indians in East Asia should be started. It was resolved that "Independence of India complete and free from foreign domination, interference and / or control of whatever nature shall be the object of the Movement." To achieve that end it was resolved, "that Military action against the British in India will be taken only by the Indian National Army and

under the command of Indians, together with such military, naval and air co-operation and assistance as may be requested from the Japanese by the Council of Action (of the Indian Independence League.)”

This Conference also decided, “that after the liberation of India, framing of the future constitution of India will be left entirely to the representatives of the people of India.”

As the Tokyo Conference was attended by only a limited number of representatives, rather by good-will missions representing the Indian Community in East Asia, it was decided to hold another conference at Bangkok, the capital of Thailand as soon as possible, where representatives of Indians in all the territories in East Asia should be present. The object of this conference was to be to officially inaugurate the Indian Independence Movement, and to frame a constitution of that movement.

After the Tokyo Conference concluded, representatives and members of the goodwill delegations attending the Conference interviewed the officials of the Japanese War Ministry, with a view to have closer contacts with them.

An interesting point worth mentioning here is that the Indian representatives gathered in Tokyo, wanted to see Raja Mahendra Pratap who was at that time unofficially interned at Kokubunji, Tokyo. The Japanese authorities did not like it, but could not openly disallow the Indian dignitaries to see Rajaji. Hence some of them did see Rajaji.

### The Bangkok Conference

Rash Behari Bose had many conferences with the Japanese Government officials, and then it was decided to hold the proposed conference of Indian representatives from throughout East Asia in Bangkok on 15th June, 1942. Accordingly, all the Indian organisations in different parts of East Asia were duly informed.

Rash Behari Bose and ten other Indian representatives from Capan, including one from Manchuria left Tokyo on 1st May 1942. After a strenuous journey of about three weeks, they reached Saigon in Indo-China, from where they flew to Bangkok.

It is interesting to note that while the Tokyo delegation was putting up at Saigon in the Majestic Hotel, some delegates from Borneo and the Philippines were also there in the same Hotel. The Japanese did not like that both the delegations should come into contact with each other, as they are of a suspicious nature. This was later on very much resented by the Indian leaders, and the Japanese had to put up an apology. The writer was a member of the delegation from Japan and also a member of the Reception Committee later on formed in Bangkok, and as such recollects vivid and graphic descriptions of what transpired at the meeting and the Conference, and would like to pen them down as bellow.

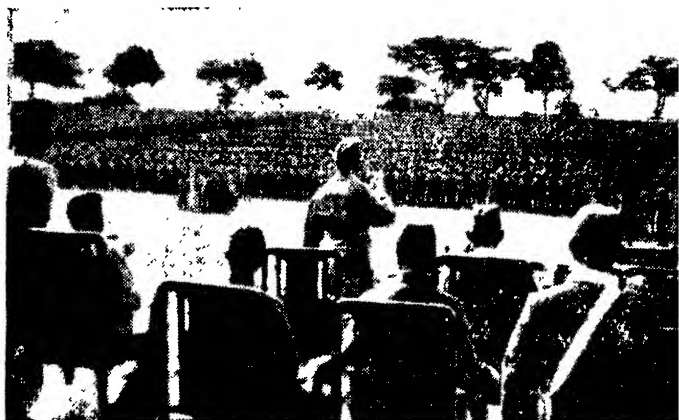
When the Tokyo delegation arrived in Bangkok preparations were already well on their way for holding the proposed historic Conference. Other delegations also started arriving in Bangkok.

Soon after our arrival in Bangkok, we started making preparations for the proposed Conference. A Preparatory Committee was formed with Mr. A. M. Sahay as Chairman, and Mr. N. Raghavan, Col. N. S. Gill, Mr. Sivaram, Mr. Debnathdas, Mr. Deshpande, and others as its members. This Committee in turn directed the local Indian organisation to form a Reception Committee. As a result a Reception Committee was formed under the Chairmanship of Sri Debnath Das. It was decided to hold the plenary Session of the Conference at the Silpakorn Theatre Hall, the premier art gallery of Bangkok.

By the beginning of the second week of June, 1941, almost all the delegates to the Conference had arrived. A total of 120 delegates were to attend the conference, half from the Army and half from the civil side. Most of them were putting up at the Trocodaro Hotel, Bangkok's premier Hotel. It was a thrilling scene to observe the stalwarts of the former British Indian Army in the streets of Bangkok, and more because they had come there in order to chalk out a plan of action, which was entirely opposite of objective for which they had left India. There they had come to decide to fight against those who had sent them overseas to fight for them.

The historic day of 15th June, 1942 arrived. The Plenary Session started at the Silpakorn Theatre Hall at 9.00 a. m. Besides the delegates to the Conference, the hall was packed to its capacity by the Indian residents of Bangkok. They had come there to watch the proceedings.





***Netaji addressing the I. N. A. soldiers  
at Singapore, 6th July, 1943.***

which were intended to decide their as well as their country's fate. The diplomatic representatives from the friendly nations were also present.

A big portrait of Mahatma Gandhi and many other portraits as those of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Sri Subhas Chandra Bose were displayed on the dais. Besides the national tricolour, were seen big placards bearing the slogans "Freedom is our birth right.", "England's difficulty is India's opportunity.", "Asia for Asiatics.", "Complete Independence, from any alien rule is our objective", and so on.

The delegates represented the Indian POWS and the Indian residents of Japan, Manchukuo, Hongkong, Shanghai, Borneo, the Philippines, Java, Thailand, Malaya and Burma.

There were nine delegates from Japan headed by Sri Anand Mohan Sahay, ably assisted by late Sri D. S. Deshpande.

From Manchuria, Sri A. M. Nair was the sole delegate.

From Shanghai, there were three delegates headed by Sri Pyara Singh.

From Hongkong, there were three delegates headed by Sri D. M. Khan.

From the Philippines, came three delegates headed by Sri Daljit Singh.

From Borneo, there were four delegates, headed by Sri J. Lalchand, and assisted by Sri V. N. K. Pillai.



From Java and Sumatra, came three delegates, headed by Sri A. Haq.

From Thailand there were twelve delegates, headed by Sri Deb Nath Das. Others included S. Ishar Singh, Pt. Raghunath Shastri, Mrs. J. D. Mehtani, etc.

From Malaya, came eighteen delegates, headed by Sri N. Raghavan, President of the Indian Independence League, Malaya. Others included Sri K. P. K. Menon, Sri B. K. Das, Sri Budh Singh, etc.

From Buram, came about seven delegates, headed by Sri Lathia. Others included Sri Mushtaq, Randheri, Sri Abdul Sattar and others.

The Military (those Indian prisoners of war, who had volunteered themselves to fight for the freedom of the motherland) was represented by about sixty delegates. They were headed by their G. O. C. Captain Mohan Singh. This number included four delegates, who were headed by Captain Hakim Khan, from the Indian prisoners of war in Hongkong. Along with Captain Mohan Singh were prominent men like Maj. General A.C. Chatterji, Colonels N. S. Gill, Hibib-ul-Rehman G. Q. Gilani, Burhanuddin, Prakash, Ram Sarup and others.

The diplomatic representatives present at the plenary Session included the Thai Foreign Minister, Nai Wichit Wathakan, the Japanese Generals, the Japanese Ambassador, Mr. Tsubakami, the German Minister, Dr. Wedlar, the Italian Minister, Commander Grimolis and others.

The Conference started exactly at 10 a. m., with the singing of the national anthem of Bande-Matram. Then the messages of felicitations and encouragements from Shri Subhas Chandra Bose, General Hideki Tojo, the Prime Minister of Japan, Field Marshal Phibul Sangkham, the Prime Minister of Thailand, Herr Von Ribbentrop, Foreign Minister of Germany, Count Ciano, Foreign Minister of Italy, were read.

The messages read, the Conference started its business. Rash Behari Bose was unanimously elected the President.

That followed an address by the Chairman of the Reception Committee. While tracing the history of India's fight for freedom, the Chairman expressed his hope that Sri Subhas Chandra Bose also would come to East Asia and take a leading part in the freedom movement which the Indians in East Asia had started.

Then a speech was delivered by Pandit Raghunath Shastri, who welcomed all the delegates, on behalf on the Indian Community in Thailand. He stated that Indians in Thailand felt it a matter of pride to receive all the representatives of Indians in East Asia, who had come there to take an historic step—unparalleled in the history of world revolutions. He also said that Indians in Thailand would extend their whole-hearted support to the movement.

Amidst loud cheers, then, rose the newly elected President. In his Presidential address, Sri Rash Behari Bose traced the history of India's

struggle for freedom from the battle of Plassy, laying special stress on the 1857 war of independence and the Bengal Partition, leading to Mahatma Gandhi's satyagraha and the 1928 Congress Resolution demanding complete Independence.

He then turned towards the outbreak of war in East Asia, which, he said, "provides a golden opportunity to Indians to achieve their goal of independence. Japan is a friendly power, and is prepared to give all-out aid to any such Indian movement, which strives to wrest freedom from the unwilling hands." Sri Rash Behari Bose then referred to General Tojo's statement in the Japanese Diet on the 15th of March, 1942. In that statement the Japanese Premier had expressed his hope that Indians would make use of the golden opportunity provided to them by the East Asia War, and that Japan would extend all aid to the Indian freedom fighters.

President Bose's address was followed by speeches by G. O. C. Mohan Singh, Shri N. Raghavan, Col. N. S. Gill, Sri A. M. Sahay and Mrs. J. D. Mehtani, the only lady delegate.

"India for Indians", with this slogan started Mr. Sahay his speech in Hindustani. Sri Anand Mohan Sahay in his speech described the different phases of Indian Independence struggle since the first war of Indian Independence of 1857 and pointed out that the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Gandhiji during the last 25 years had organised and prepared the Indian masses to such an extent that even the British Imperialism was unable to ignore them and the

Congress. He asked the Conference to keep in mind the fact that whatever steps they decided to take to free India their success or failure would almost entirely depend upon the extent of understanding and co-operation they could secure from the people of India in their struggle. Mr. Sahay's speech was followed by that of General Moban Singh who spoke in Hindustani for over half an hour. His speech was a piece of fine oratory. He described in detail the events in Malaya before and after the British surrender. He also placed the services of all the volunteers from the Indian prisoners of war at the disposal of the newly organised Indian Independence Movement. He also stated that the newly organised Indian National Armed Force would fight only under the Command of Indians, and for the achievement of the objective of freedom of India, complete and free from any kind of foreign control or interference. He described Mahatma Gandhi as the greatest living man and that his name was a source of inspiration for the Indian soldiers, ready to lay down their lives at the altar of India's freedom.

"Our motherland is calling," thus started the orator N. Raghavan the leader of Indians in Malaya. N. Raghavan felt proud to see leaders of all communities gathered there under one banner—the Tricolour of India, and ready to throw themselves into a fight unparalleled in the annals of the world history. He traced the history of the Indian National Congress, "the greatest democratic organisation of the world", and warned the delegates to be cautious against any

interference from those who 'professed to be their friends. He said that only Indians were to decide as to how they were to carry on their struggle.

Colonel N. S. Gill, said to be the ablest military brain among Indians in the East, spoke in a thundering voice, like a soldier. His speech centred around one fact and that was, how Indian soldiers in the British Army felt before the outbreak of the East Asia War, and how their outlook changed during the war and after the surrender of Singapore. He also described how every thing worth knowing was always denied to the Indian soldier and how he was kept ignorant regarding the freedom movement in the country.

That was followed by a speech of Mrs. J. D. Mehtani, who on behalf of Indian women in East Asia, declared that Indian women would not lag behind in the service of Motherland.

### The Plenary Session concluded

From 16th June to 23rd June, the Conference held its session at the Oriental Hotel. All these sessions were held in camera. On the 16th a subjects Committee of eighteen members was elected with Sri N. Raghavan as its Chairman. This subject committee drafted in total 34 resolutions, all of which were passed by the Conference in toto, a few with certain amendments. One of the resolutions was to form a Council of Action. When this resolution was passed, election was also held. There were seven candidates for 4 seats. G. O. C. Mohan Singh, Col. G.Q. Gilani, Sri

N. Raghavan, Sri K. P. K. Menon, Sri A. M. Sahay, Sri Debnath Das, and Sri Budh Singh. Out of these first four were elected by majority votes.

The important Resolutions passed by the Conference were as follows :—

1. “Resolved that a movement for achieving complete and immediate Independence of India be sponsored by this conference.”

2. “Resolved that this movement shall consider Mahatma Gandhi as its Greatest Leader.”

3. “This conference endorses the view of the Tokyo Conference held in March 1942, that the complete independence of India free from any foreign control, domination or interference of whatever nature shall be the object of this movement and is emphatically of the opinion that the time has arrived to take necessary steps for the attainment of that object.”

4. “Resolved that the Indian Independence movement sponsored by this Conference shall be guided by the principles indicated below:—

(a) That Unity, Faith and Sacrifice shall be the motto of the Indian Independence Movement.

(b) That India be considered as one and indivisible.

(c) That all activities of this Movement be on a national basis and not on sectional, communal or religious basis.

(d) That in view of the fact that the Indian National Congress is the only political organisation which could claim to represent the real

interests of India and as such be acknowledged the only body representing India, this conference is of the opinion that the programme and plan of this Movement must be so guided, controlled and directed as to bring them in line with the aims and intentions of the Indian National Congress.

(e) That the framing of the future constitution of India be only by representatives of the people of India."

5. "Resolved that an organisation be started for carrying on the Indian Independence Movement and that it shall be known as the Indian Independence League."

6. "Resolved that the Indian Independence League shall immediately proceed to raise an army, called the Indian National Army from among the Indian soldiers (combatants and non-combatants) and such civilians as may hereafter be recruited for military service in the cause of India's Freedom."

7. "The Indian Independence League shall consist of :—

- (a) Council of Action,
- (b) A Committee of Representatives.
- (c) Territorial Committees, and
- (d) Local Branches.

8. "A Council of Action consisting of a President and four members, of whom at least one half shall be from the Indian National Army in East Asia, shall be appointed by the delegates to this Conference. The first President shall be Syt. Rash Behari Bose, and four members shall be :—

1. Sri N. Raghavan.

2. Capt. Mohan Singh.
3. Sri K. P. K. Menon.
4. Col. G. Q. Gilani."

9. "The Council of Action shall be responsible for carrying out the policy and programmes of work laid down by this Conference and as may hereafter be laid down by the Committee of Representatives and shall deal with all new matters that may arise from time to time and which may not be provided for by the committee itself."

10. "Resolved that a request be made to the Nippon Government that they may be pleased to place immediately all Indian soldiers in the Territories of East Asia under their control at the disposal of this Movement."

11. "Resolved that the formation, command control and organisation of the Indian National Army be in the hands of Indians themselves."

12. "Resolved that it is the earnest desire of this Conference that the Indian National Army from its inception be accorded the powers and status of a full National Army of an Independent India on a footing of equality with the armies of Japan and other friendly Powers."

13. "Resolved that the Indian National Army be made use of only :—

(a) For operation only against the British or other Foreign Powers in India.

(b) For the purpose of securing and safeguarding Indian National Independence and for such other purposes as may assist in the



achievement of the object viz. the independence of India."

14. "Resolved that all the officers and men of the proposed Indian National Army shall be members of the Indian Independence League and shall owe allegiance to the League."

15. "Resolved that the Indian National Army shall be under the direct control of the Council of Action and that the said Army shall be organised and commanded by the General Officer Commanding, Indian National Army, in accordance with the directions of the Council of Action."

16. "Resolved that before taking military action against the British or any other foreign Power in India the Council of Action will assure itself that such action is in conformity with the expressed or implied wishes of the Indian National Congress."

17. "That all foreign assistance of whatever nature shall be only to the extent and of the type asked for by the Council of Action."

18. "Resolved that for the purpose of financing the Independence Movement, the Council of Action be authorised to raise funds from Indians in East Asia."

19. "This Conference having learned with regret that Indians in certain countries under the occupation of the Imperial Japanese forces are being treated as enemy aliens and suffer hardships and loss in consequence, resolves that the Imperial Government of Japan may be pleased to make a declaration to the effect :—

(a) That Indians residing in the territories

occupied by the Imperial Japanese forces, shall not be considered as enemy nationals so long as they do not indulge in any action injurious to this Movement or hostile to the interests of Japan, and

(b) That the properties both movable and immovable of those Indians who are now residing in India or elsewhere (including the properties of Indian companies, firms or partnerships) be not treated by Japan as enemy properties so long as the management or control of such properties is vested in any person residing in Japan or in any of the countries occupied by or under the control or influence of the Imperial Japanese Forces, and to instruct the authorities concerned in the respective countries to give effect to this policy as early as possible”

20. “Resolved that this movement adopts the present National Flag of India and requests the Imperial Government of Japan and the Royal Government of Thailand and the Government of all other friendly Powers to recognize the said flag in all territories under their jurisdiction.”

21. “This Conference requests Sri Subhas Chandra Bose to be kind enough to come to East Asia and appeals to the Imperial Government of Japan to use its good office to obtain the necessary permission and conveyances from the Government of Germany to enable Sri Subhas Chandra Bose to reach East Asia safely.”

The last of the Resolutions was.

34. “A copy of the resolutions adopted by

**this conference be forwarded to the Imperial Japanese Government, with a request that they should accept these resolutions and make a formal declaration to that effect.**

As already described it took full eight days for the Conference to finish with its agenda and adopt the above resolutions. Heated discussions took place, in which the following delegates took a leading part :—

Sri N Raghavan, Sri A.M. Sahay, Sri K.P. K. Menon, Capt Mohan Singh, Col N. S. Gill, Sri Budh Singh, Sri B. K. Dalal, Sri E. P. Pillai, Prof. E. Now, Sri Lathia, Sri Mushtaq, Sri A. Sattar, Sri Debnath Das, Sri D. S. Deshpande, Sri D. M. Khan, Col. A. C. Chatterji, Sri Daljit Singh, etc.

It is worth mentioning here, that Sri N. Raghavan took a prominent part in drafting the resolutions passed at the Bangkok Conference, and he deserves a great credit.

Thus came into being the Indian Independence League.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **Indian Independence League—Rise And Eclipse.**

The Bangkok Conference over, the Indian Independence League in East Asia was established with its Headquarters in Bangkok. The territorial committees of the League were also established in Thailand, Malaya, Burma and other territories. Several branches under these territorial committees also came into being.

The establishment of the organisation of the League was soon followed by the news of the "Quit India" Resolution of the Indian National Congress and launching of the August Revolution within India. That news coupled with that of the mass arrests including all the national leaders, gave further impetus to the Independence Movement in East Asia. Throughout East Asia rallies were held in support of the freedom movement.

#### **Organisation of I. I. L.**

Headquarters of the Indian Independence League in East Asia were established at Bangkok (Wireless Road). Shri R. K. Das, a prominent lawyer of Malaya was appointed Secretary General of the Headquarters. The five members of the Council of Action, including the President, held the following Departments under them.

1. President, Sri Rash Behari Bose Finance & External affair.
2. Capt. Mohan Singh, G. O. C. of I. N. Army.

3. Sri N. Raghavan ; Organisation and Contact.

4. Sri K. P. K. Menon ; Publicity and Propaganda.

5. Col. G. Q. Gilani ; Military affairs, Training, etc.

Other prominent men, who took a leading part were Sri D. S. Deshpande, Col. N. S. Gill Sri A. M. Sahay, and Sri A. M. Nair. Sri S. A. Ayer was appointed Incharge of Broadcasting and Publicity under Sri K.P.K. Menon.

Sri A. M. Sahay was incharge of publication. A daily bulletin "Azad" was also started under his guidance. Many publications like "Message of Freedom", "Singapur's Surrender and "Fight for Freedom" were also published by him.

A radio programme was also started under the name of the "Indian Independence League Headquarters Radio." from Bangkok Radio Station.

Bose, accompanied by the late Sri D. S. Deshpande started a flying tour of Southern East Asia, in order to study the condition of Indians in all parts of East Asia, and also organise them. Their tour resulted in the reorganisation of the League Organisation under the Headquarters.

In Thailand, the League was organised under the Chairmanship of Sri Debnath Das. The prominent Indians of Thailand extended their whole-hearted support to the Organisation. These men included Pt. Raghunath Shastri, Sri B. A. Kapasi, Mr. Salebbhoy, M. Ali Akbar, S. Ishar, Singh, Sri Bachan Singh and others. Branches

of the League were also established in many towns and cities of Thailand.

In Malaya, the Organisation had a brilliant leader in the person of Sr N. Raghavan, who remained the Chairman of the Malayan Territorial committee of the I. I. L. Almost all the Indian residents rallied under the Tricolour Banner of the I. I. L. and came forward enthusiastically to play their part in the country's fight for freedom. Many papers were started including "Purna Swaraj" of Penang, "Azad Hindustan" of Singapore and others. The Radio Station at Singapore was also utilised by the League for its own broadcast.

In Burma, the League machinery was overhauled and in place of Mr. Lathia, Sri B. Prasad, a young and enthusiastic worker, was made the Chairman of the Burma Territorial Committee of the I. I. L. Sri D. S. Deshpande took the job of the Secretary General of the Burma Territorial Committee on his own shoulders, keeping in view the strategical position of Burma.

In Borneo, Sri S. C. Chakravarty became the Chairman, and he organised the League there marvellously.

In Indo-China, the I. I. L. could not be organised due to the reactionary policy of the waning French regime there. But there, under the banner of our freedom movement a marvellous feat was achieved. And that was the organisation of the Free India Radio, Saigon. Colonel Ehsan Qadir and Colonel I. Hassan deserve the credit for that. It is just to say that the Free India

Radio at Saigon, under the control of these two young Colonels of the young Army of India's Liberation, was a tremendous force. They worried the British and their mouth piece, "The All India Radio", so much that the A. I. R. had to start a special programme to counteract the marvellous patriotic broadcasts by The Free India Radio, Saigon. The most praise-worthy part of that is that both the Colonels had always to fight the Japanese for carrying on the propaganda freely and without any censorship. It will not be out of place here to say that it was these two young and brilliant Colonels of the I. N. A. who just gave an impetus to the Quit India Resolution passed by the A.I.C.C.

### Organisation of I.N.A.

In accordance with the resolution, passed at the Bangkok Conference, to organise an army to drive the British or any other alien power out of India, the Indian National Army, came into being in September, 1942. General Mohan Singh after his return from Bangkok, poured himself heart and soul in the formation of this Army, that created a new chapter in the annals of India's history.

By December, 1942, the strength of this voluntary army rose to 17,000 strong that comprised the No. 1 Hind Field Force. This Force included the following Brigades and other Units.

1. Gandhi Brigade—Commanded by Maj. H. S. Betar.

2. Nehru Brigade— „ „ „ I J. Kiani.







*Netaji's First arrival in Bangkok  
3rd August, 1943.*

3. Azad Brigade—Commanded by Major Prakash.
4. S. S. Group—Commanded by Major Taj.
5. Intelligence Group—Commanded by Major Tajammul Hussain.
6. No. Base Hospital.
7. No. 1 Medical Aid Party.
8. No. 1 Engineering Coy.
9. No. 1 M. T. Coy.
10. Field Propaganda Unit,
11. Field Force Group.

### **Training of the I. N. A.**

The training that was imparted to the members of the Indian National Army under General Mohan Singh was something quite unique. The whole programme had to be overhauled from top to bottom. It is hardly possible for any one to realise the difficulty of changing a mercenary army into a patriotic army over night. The tremendous task lay in making the I. N. A. members unlearn the rotten stuff that had been given to them as part of their training during the British regime.

The most important part of the immediate training was the spiritual training of the Indian National Army. The formation of the first three brigades of the I. N. A. after the names of Gandhi, Nehru and Azad was by itself a great training. Lectures were often delivered in the various camps where all the ranks were trained on true nationalistic lines. History of the Indian

National Congress, its grim and bitter fight against a cruel and repressive Imperialism and Capitalism, which had made India impotent in every walk of life, was the main theme of these lectures. Tremendous sacrifices that had been undergone by men and women of India for the emancipation of Mother India from the shackles of British Imperialism were put before them as ideals to be followed. Lives of the illustrious sons of India like Mahatma Gandhi, Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru, Maulana Azad, Sri Subhas Chandra Bose, Maulana Mohammad Ali and others, were put before them for inspiration. Gradually the idea of one Nation came to be stamped on every heart.

There were mass movements for literacy. Every Unit Commander was asked to see that there was no illiterate person on the roll of that Unit. Those who were educated were specially asked to help in this connection. After sometime the revolutionary literature of India that had been proscribed in India was put into the hands of the I.N.A. members. Thus political education in the real sense of the term was injected into the body of the I.N.A.

It will not be out of place to mention that Capt. Mohan Singh, G.O.C. of Indian National Army played a very important role in the shaping of the first Army of India's Liberation.

Neeson, Bidadari and Selatar were buzzing with activities from September 1942, onwards. In these camps the I. N. A. members would live together, get training together, dine together, would celebrate their festivals together without

any discrimination of cast, creed and colour. The factor that is always kept upon "Divide and Rule" was conspicuous ~~with~~ its absence and everything went on quite smoothly.

The Military training imparted to those soldiers of India's fight for freedom was also something quite new. The words of command were given in Hindustani. Tactics and military strategy that were only meant for high ranking officers during the British Regime, were made available for the soldiers of the I.N.A. An Officers Training School was established with Col. Habib-ul-Rehman as its Commander. This O.T.S. was opened to all the soldiers of the I.N.A., and every soldier that went there as a cadet could learn all the tactics, and strategy of military warfare.

From September to December 1942, there was exhaustive training for the I. N. A. Meanwhile the news of the "Quit India" Resolution of 8th, August, 1942, and the wholesale arrests of our revered leaders, and the subsequent ghastly story of oppression, repression and terror, perpetrated deliberately on our unarmed countrymen, reached these training Camps in detail. This terrible news gave a further acceleration and momentum to the training of the I. N. A. The enthusiasm and spirit of sacrifice was tremendous at that particular period. The I.N.A. was itching for action and the gates of the jails in India would have been broken open by the I. N. A., had the distance been not so great. Indeed it was really very difficult to control the passion of the people to free their leaders and

**India from bondage at that particular period.**

Every soldier was pledged to save the honour of his country and the Tricolour of India and he started preparing himself for every eventuality, contingency and even for death itself. The long night marches, the hard arms training, the mock offensive and defensive battles, regular physical training every morning together with a full dose of spiritual training, mentioned above, were all steeling the Indian National Army soldiers for the actual front life very soon.

In short, there was a new life, a new consciousness and a new strength injected into these fighters for India's freedom. And Gen. Mohan Singh deserves the credit for that.

### **Crisis in the Organisation.**

It was right at this juncture, that a crisis in the whole organisation of the Indian Independence League, including the Indian National Army cropped up. The main cause of this crisis was the Japanese and their attitude towards our movement.

First of all the Japanese Government did not respond to the last of the Resolutions passed at the Bangkok Conference. In that Resolution the Japanese Government were requested to accept all the Resolutions and make a categorical statement to that effect. Accordingly a copy of the Bangkok Conference Resolutions was sent to the Japanese Government on 22nd July, 1942. Although there was a general reply reavowing Japan's determination to help India to get complete independence and stating that she had

no territorial or other ambitions over India, yet no definite reply from Tokyo was received. The Council of Action were, therefore, much dissatisfied with the official Japanese attitude, and their delaying tactics.

Secondly, the Japanese High Command was showing unwillingness to help in the quick expansion of the Indian National Army.

And thirdly, the Iwakuro Kikan, Japanese official organisation, meant to act as liason body between the Japanese Military authorities and the Government and the I. I. L. and I.N.A., was too much interfering in the working of the League and the Army. Besides, a policy of "Divide et impera" was also being exercised by the Kikan, and certain selfish and interested individuals and parties among Indians were being made use of, in this connection.

### **Crisis in Burma.**

The first of the crisis came up between the Burma Territorial Committee and the Japanese Military authorities as well as the Iwakuro Kikan. The trouble started between Sri Babu Prashad, the Chairman, and the late Sri D. S. Deshpande, the General Secretary, representing the League, and Col. Kitabe and Col. Ogura representing the Iwakuro Kikan and the Japanese Military authorities. These Japanese officers and their subordinates used to interfere too much in the League work, and both the young Indian leaders could not tolerate that interference. At long last, the climax came over the question of management of properties

belonging to those Indians who had left Burma for India. The Japanese not only wanted to treat such properties as "enemy properties" but also wanted the I. I. League to carry on the management of such properties as per instructions from the Japanese. The most amusing aspect of this side-story was that the godowns and such like properties belonging to Indians in India or elsewhere, used to be under the charge of the League, but even an ordinary Japanese soldier would go and break open the lock and take away what-ever he liked. This was very much resented by Sri Prasad and Sri Deshpande. Hence their refusal to do anything with such matters.

There also arose a difference of opinion between the League and the Japanese authorities regarding appointment of certain office bearers. Sri Prasad, however, keeping up his independent stand, considered the Japanese "disapproval" as intruding upon his as well as the organisation's rights. This followed many conferences and interviews between Sri Prasad and Sri Deshpande on one side and the Kikan and Japanese authorities on the other. During these conferences and interviews, heated discussions took place, and Col. Kitabe made some insulting remarks against Sri Prasad. Sri Prasad protested against that. Later on he and Deshpande sent a comprehensive report to President Bose, but the letter was intercepted by the Japanese. The result was that he had to pay the price for his independent stand, in that, that he was deported from Burma to Thailand in 1942-43. This young and brave

fighter remained in Thailand, till the Japanese surrendered and till he was arrested by the British last year.

Sri D. J. Deshpande also left Burma for Singapore, and the League organisation in Burma was the first to be shadowed by the eclipse.

### **Crisis in the I. N. A.**

As the Japanese Government did not send any definite reply to the Bangkok Conference Resolutions by November '42, General Mohan Singh in a meeting of the Council of Action expressed his opinion that the Japanese had evil designs, and therefore a clarification should be sought from them. Hence a demand was forwarded to the Japanese authorities by the President on behalf of the Council of Action.

In the meanwhile, matters worsened and the Council of Action refused to allow the I. N. A. that had been organised in Malaya to be transferred to Burma, before all outstanding points were clarified by the Japanese Government.

Before any other demand was put forth by the Council of Action, or any reply received to their previous demand asking for clarification, the situation became most critical on 8th, December 1942, when Col. Gill was arrested by the Japanese military authorities. At the time of his arrest, Col Gill was at the residence of General Mohan Singh, and in spite of the General's protest, the military police took him away.

Next day a meeting of the Council of Action



was held. Sri N. Raghavan not attending. It was later on reported that he had already resigned from the membership of the Council of Action. At this meeting the other three members, namely, Gen. Mohan Singh, Sri K. P. K. Menon and Lt. Col. G. Q. Gilani also resigned from the Council of Action. The resignations were accepted by the President, Sri Rash Behari Bose, and he alone resumed the leadership of the movement.

For a few days it seemed as if the atmosphere was becoming calm. But the anti-climax came on 29th December, when General Mohan Singh was arrested by the Japanese, and the Indian National Army was dissolved according to a secret letter sent by General Mohan Singh to the various formation Commanders of the I. N. A. prior to his arrest.

### Crisis in Malaya.

After resuming the leadership of the League as well as the I. N. A. Rash Behari Bose declared that he would go to Japan and get the necessary clarifications of all the problems from the Japanese Government. He also requested that till then the organisation of the League should carry on. This was agreed to by all the Territorial Committees, but the Malaya branch asked Rash Behari Bose that "he should try every possible means to secure a clarification of all matters relating to the movement from the Tokyo Government by Declarations, Statements, and otherwise at as early a date as possible and that while the normal working of the movement was to be carried on as usual, any further move

should be decided only after the above declaration and statement."

It seemed as if the situation had been improving. But this did not last long. The Iwakuro Kikan meanwhile started building up a parallel organisation like the youth League movement. Their object was to weaken the Indian Independence Movement, and for that they carried on intensive propaganda against the League and its Leaders.

In February, 1943, the Territorial Committee of the I. I. L. Malaya, after a three days' meeting decided to present a memorandum to Rash Behari Bose, stating the difficulties of the situation. The Committee also decided to resign in case no improvement was in sight.

But before the memorandum reached the I. I. L. President, the Japanese got hold of it. As a result the Japanese brought pressure upon Bose to insist on the resignation of N. Raghavan from the Presidentship of the Malayan Branch. Sri Raghavan had to resign. Other office bearers did not resign, as they wanted to forest all the vicious plans of the Japanese who were bent upon enforcing their puppets over the League organisation.

### Eclipse.

This eclipsed the movement for some time. Although the late Sri Rash Behari Bose took the grave responsibility of carrying on the movement on his aged shoulders all by himself, and although he did not allow the movement to die away, yet the fact remains that after the crisis in the I.I.L.

and the I.N.A. the Indian freedom movement in East Asia suffered a grave set-back. The enthusiasm of the I. N. Army and Indian people chilled down to its lowest ebb. On the other hand, whatever may be said about the differences between Sri Rash Behari Bose and General Mohan Singh and other members of the Council of Action, one thing emerges crystal clear from the crisis that Indians never wanted to be mere stooges of the Japanese. The crisis made it abundantly clear that Indians never wanted a change of masters. They really wanted a free India that could stand on her own legs without any foreign influence.

## CHAPTER VI.

### **New Leader (Netaji) and the New Life.**

After the arrest of General Mohan Singh, some of the members of the I.N.A. preferred to leave the field of the I.N.A. as a protest, whereas others wanted to carry on as fighters for India's Independence on the assurance of Sri Rash Behari Bose that India's fight for Independence could never cease, and that no single personality, howsoever great, could dissolve the I.N.A. The crisis had, however, made all the Indians awake and alert to save themselves from the exploitation of any foreign power.

On the 10th of February, a meeting of all the I.N.A. Officers including the N. C. O. S. was held, and the President reformed the I.N.A. and placed it directly under his control. He gave further assurance that I.N.A.'s only aim would be to free India from foreign bondage. The result was that many of those, who had left its fold as a protest against General Mohan Singh's arrest, began rejoining the I.N.A.

A Committee, consisting of Lt. Col. J. K. Bhonsle, Lt. Col. M. Z. Kiani, Lt. Col. A. D. Loganadan, and Lt. Col. Ehsan Qadir, was set up to deal with the military affairs. As a result of the efforts of the Committee, a new department was opened at the Headquarters of the Indian Independence League, which was called the Directorate of Military Bureau and the I. N. A. was put on a new footing under this Directorate.

On 17th, April, 1943, the Directorate functioned as follows :—

|                                |                                   |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Director of Military Bureau... | Lt./Col. J. K. Bhonsle.           |
| Military Secretary             | ... Major P. K. Sehgal.           |
| Chief of the General Staff     | ... Lt /Col. Shah Nawaz Khan.     |
| Chief Administrator            | ... Lt./Col. A. D. Loganadan      |
| D.P.M.                         | ... Cap. Abdul Rashid.            |
| O.T.S.                         | ... Maj. Habib-ul-Rehman.         |
| Adjutant                       | .... Maj. C.J. Stracey.           |
| Finance                        | .... Capt. Krishna Murti.         |
| Reinforcement                  | .... Maj. Mata ul-Malik.          |
| "Q" Branch                     | ... Maj. K. P. Thimaya.           |
| D.M.S.                         | .... Lt. / Col. B. C. Allagappan. |

### First Singapore Conference.

Alongwith the reorganisation of the I. N. A., the I. I. L. Headquarters were also reorganised. In place of Sri B.K. Das, Lt./Col. A. C. Chatterji was appointed as General Secretary. Lt. Col. Ehsan Qadir was appointed Director of Civil Recruits, at the Headquarters of the I. I. L. Four Training Camps were opened under him at Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh, and Serampan for the purpose.

Meanwhile a Conference of delegates of all the I. I. L. Territorial Committees throughout East Asia was called at Shonan (Singapore) at the end of April, 1943. The conference was held under the Presidentship of Sri Rash Behari Bose. Among those who attended the Conference, were Sri B. Prasad (head of the Burmese delegation), Sri Debnath Das, S. Ishar Singh, Pt. Raghunath Shastri, Mohammad Ali Akbar (Thailand), Mr. Chidambaran (head of the Malayan delegation), Dr. A.C. Naidu and Mr. D. M. Khan (Hongkong) Mr. S. C. Chakravarty (Borneo), Sri D. S. Deshpande (Japan) and others.

At this conference, the constitution of the Indian Independence League, passed at the Bangkok Conference was in certain respects altered and amended. The object of this step taken, was to put the organisation on stronger footing.

Also it was at this Conference that Sri Rash Behari Bose announced that Sri Subhas Chandra Bose was expected in East Asia any moment.

### **The Arrival of the Saviour.**

Soon after the first Singapore Conference was over, Sri, Rash Behari Bose left for Japan. It was understood that the President had gone there to have negotiations directly with the Tokyo Government in connection with the Indian freedom movement in East Asia and the attitude of the Japanese Government towards it. Especially he went to seek the clarification of the Tokyo Government vis-a-vis the Bangkok

Resolutions and points relating to the organisation in general.

It was at this juncture when Indians in East Asia were thrilled to know on 15th June, 1943, that Subhas Chandra Bose had arrived in Tokyo from Berlin.

Ever since the outbreak of the East Asia War, Indians in East Asia would often hear the golden voice in ringing tones of this illustrious son of India from a far off country. That voice would reach Indians off and on, the sincerity and earnestness of which would overwhelm each and every Indian. From the very inception of the freedom movement in East Asia, Indians there craved to have him among them as their leader. And they expressed it during the Bangkok conference. But it took exactly one year before they were actually honoured by the presence of their beloved leader amongst themselves.

On June the 15th, 1943—exactly one year after the Bangkok conference, Indians in East Asia came to know that Subhas Babu reached Tokyo on the 13th June and had already an interview with General Hideki Tojo, the then Prime Minister of Japan. On the same night, the same familiar and ringing voice of Subhas Chandra Bose was heard over the Tokyo Radio. To most of the Indians it was rather incredible, that, he was so near to them. Their dreams and wishful thinking had both materialised and at long last their missing young leader was with them.

### **Second Singapore Conference.**

In the meanwhile another Conference of the

representatives of Indians from throughout East Asia was called on 4th of July, 1943, Subhas Babu arrived in Singapore on 2nd July, alongwith Sri Rash Behari Bose. Subhas Bose arrived there hale and hearty, full of inspiration and determination with the spirit of "Do or Die," and last but not (the) least as one who was destined to be the greatest Military leader—the Sipah-Salar-a-Azam, of India's Army of Liberation.

On 4th July 1943, the arranged conference was held at the Toa Gekijo (Cathay Building), Singapore. Sri Rash Behari Bose presided. The old man delivered a fiery presidential address, in the course of which he told the Indian leaders gathered there, that he had brought a present for them, and that was Subhas—the leader of the millions. He proudly invited Subhas Chandra Bose to take over the presidentship of the Indian Independence League in East Asia.

Subhas Babu accepted this heavy responsibility and made an impressive speech there. During his speech he stated in detail the events which led to the outbreak of the World War, his escape and his desire to continue the fight for India's freedom from abroad. He also foreshadowed his plan to form a Provisional Government of free India to lead the National Army of India's liberation to battle at the most opportune moment. After accepting the responsibility, he appointed Sri Rash Behari Bose as his Supreme Adviser.

On July the 5th, the day after he took over the presidentship of the Indian Independence



League, Subhas Chandra Bose took the salute at a Parade of the Azad Hind Fauj (Indian National Army) on the maidan opposite to the Municipal Office in Shonan (Singapore). Clad in white Achkan Pajama and white Gandhi Cap, Subhas Chandra Bose addressed all ranks of the I. N. A. It was his maiden speech in East Asia. It was one of the most remarkable speeches, he made in his life. Subhas Bose gave a new slogan to the fighters for India's freedom, when he among many other things, said "When the Germans invaded France, on the lips of every German Soldier was 'To Paris,' 'To Paris' And they achieved it. When the Japanese launched their campaign against the Anglo-American on the lips of every Japanese soldiers was 'To Singapore' 'To Singapore'. Now we have to start our sacred and historic campaign, we will say 'To Delhi' 'To Delhi' "On 'To Delhi' will be our slogan." This simply enchanted the Indian soldiers and their enthusiasm knew no bounds.

The following day, Subhas Bose, and General Hideki Tojo, Premier of Japan, jointly took the salute at another parade-of the Azad Hind Fauj on the same maidan.

On July the 8th, 1943, Subhas Chandra Bose announced to the World the formation of the Azad Hind Fauj (Indian National Army)

On July 9th, a mammoth mass rally of Indians in Shonan was held to receive their leader. Over 50,000 Indians attended. It was at this meeting that Subhas Babu placed before Indians in East Asia a programme of Total





*Netaji reading the First Proclamation of the Azad H  
Government, issued after the I. N. A. entry into India  
on 21st March, 1944.*

Mobilisation of men, money and materials to win India's complete Independence. He also gave a new slogan to his countrymen, and that was "Jai Hind"—Victory to India.

Three days later on July 9th, Subhas Babu announced that he had decided to organise a fighting force of Indian women in East Asia, to be named after the famous Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi, who fought tooth and nail against the British during India's first War of Independence in 1857.

The reception that was accorded to Subhas Babu on his arrival in Singapore was to be envied even by great emperors. Not only at Singapore but throughout East Asia, mass rallies of Indians were held expressing their jubilation over the arrival of their Leader. In fact Indians in East Asia rose as one man and acclaimed him as their "Netaji" and entrusted to him their own destiny and that of their mother country. The enthusiasm of the I. N. A. members and that of the general public that had been chilled a bit due to the unfortunate crisis in the organisation, now knew no bounds. Those who had been hitching and hesitating for active participation in the activities of the I. N. A. due to their doubts about the leadership of the movement and sincerity of the Japanese, now came forward and staked their all simply because of Subhas, one of the greatest sons of India, whose sincerity and integrity for the cause of India's Independence had been tested times without number, whose selfishness, patriotism and great personal risk of his own life for the

cause of India's Independence, had been as clear as broad day light. Indians in East Asia thanked their stars that Providence had sent them a great leader who could not be deceived by any power, howsoever, great and shrewd on the question of India's complete Independence. They believed Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was the one person who was destined to make them see India fully independent and glorious in every walk of life.

## CHAPTER VII

### Azad Hind Organisation in Europe.

Before I proceed further with Netaji's whirlwind tours, his rousing of the Indians in East Asia, his reorganisation of the Indian Independence League and the I.N.A., it is worth-mentioning ~~as to~~ what Netaji did in Europe prior to his arrival in East Asia. I would, therefore, like to depict in a few words the description of the sister organisation in the west—the organisation which was organised by India's dynamic leader—Subhas—before he left Europe for East Asia.

For Indians in Europe, the mystery of Subhas Babu's disappearance from India was solved sometime in October, 1941. One fine morning in October, 1941 some prominent Indians in Berlin received an invitation from a certain Senor O. Mozotta, who wished to have their company at a tea party. The invitation was issued from No. 6. Sophienstrasse, Berlin—a villa where a former British Ambassador used to reside before the war. The Indian dignitaries reached the villa of their host, whose name suggested that he was an Italian gentleman. But to their great surprise they were received by a tall, well-built, handsome, spectacled and imposing personality, who greeted them in fluent Hindustani. They were further astounded to find that the guests were all Indians. They also had a pleasant shock to discover that their host, Senor Mozotta was not an Italian but an Indian,

and was none other than their lost leader—Subhas Chandra Bose. The atmosphere was surcharged with emotion. Every body was silent.

Netaji broke the silence and said that he had come to Europe with a view to continue his struggle for India's freedom from abroad.

It was during these days that Indian troops in great numbers were surrendering to the Germans on the battlefields of Egypt and Libya. These prisoners of war learnt with a great joy that Subhas Bose was in Europe and intended to organise an armed force to help the forces of the freedom movement within India. They were eager to join the ranks of that proposed free India's armed force for the liberation of their country.

Before organising a free India Army Netaji organised the Azad Hind Sangh in Europe with its Headquarters in Berlin. Mr. Abid Hussain who later accompanied Netaji to East Asia as his private Secretary and who later became a Lt./Colonel in the Indian National Army, was the first Indian in Europe to join Subhas Babu. The first and foremost activity carried on by the Azad Hind Sangh was the radio propaganda. The first Radio programme under the name of the Azad Hind Sangh started in January, 1942. And on the historic day of 26th January, 1942—the Independence Day—the free India Army was formed with its camp at Hamburg. It was called the Freise Indian Legion. A ceremony was held at this occasion when the German and Japanese representatives were also present.

Netaji had originally asked for only 400

volunteers for the Legion. But the response was admirable and the strength of the Freise Indian Legion rose to 4,000. The Legion consisted of many units including parachutists, infantry, cavalry, mechanised corps etc. Some of them were given training at Mesertz—a camp about 11 Kilometres from the town of Regenwormleger. The rest were trained at a camp near Kuinigsberg. The training of the men was very vigorous and included all weapons like heavy and light machine guns, anti-tank guns, mortars, mountain training, swimming, riding pioneer, artillery etc. Those who were trained at Kuinigsberg had to undergo a preliminary training at Frankenberg.

Besides the exhaustive military training, the officers and men of the Freise Indian Legion were given political training. That included history of their country and world, history of the national struggle for independence inside India before and since 1857, life stories of India's national leaders and histories of the various revolutions in different countries of the world.

This was the military aspect of the organisation. On the civil side, the Azad Hind Sangh rallied all Indians in Europe under its tri-colour banner and organised them. The Azad Hind Sangh had its branches in all the main cities of Europe. The most prominent among Indians in Europe was Sri A. C. N. Nambiar and Netaji appointed him as Chief of the organisation in Europe. Later on when Netaji left for East Asia, Mr. Nambiar was



appointed a Minister of the Azad Hind Government. Other prominent men in the organisation were Dr. Sultan, incharge of the foreign affairs, Mr. M. V. Rao, Chief of the Paris branch of the organisation; Dr. Mullik, Mr. Gunpillay, Mr. Surgupta, Dr. Karta Ram and others.

The Azad Hind Sangh in Europe was carrying on a well systematised publicity and propaganda work as well. There was a paper, "Azad Hind" published by the organisation. Besides there were three radios under the control of the Sangh. They were the Azad Hind Radio, the National Congress Radio, and the Azad Muslim Radio.

Netaji left Europe for East Asia in the month of February, 1943. This was Netaji's second attempt. The first being in January of the same year. In January, Netaji left Berlin for ~~home~~ from where he was scheduled to leave. But just before his departure, he came to know ~~that~~ <sup>63</sup> that the British secret service was in the know of his plans. Hence the postponement of his programme. Second time he left Germany was in February. This time his departure, date of departure, destination, route and means and ways every thing was kept strictly confidential. Very few knew it. And it remained a mystery, till recently, when Lt/Col. A. Hasan and Maj. N. G. Swami, who came along with Netaji from Germany and were his private secretaries disclosed that they came by a German submarine.

## CHAPTER VIII

### Netaji's Whirlwind Tours and Reorganisation.

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to him during these mass rallies. Millions of eyes would be fixed at him as if they would feed on him and would still remain hungry. Netaji used to deliver his speeches in fine Hindustani, and an orator as he was, his every word would reach the very heart of the people. In his speeches, he would stress upon, peep into and botanise over all the ills prevailing in India and the only remedy to get rid of these ills, he would tell them was to unite into one brotherhood, that knew no differences of caste, colour and creed. He gave Indians a new hope. Every word that was uttered by him was chewed, ~~learnt~~ and inwardly digested by those who listened to him. It will be no exaggeration to say that in the critical year of 1943, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose came to the Indians in East Asia as their prophet and saviour.

His speeches to the members of the Indian National Army, were unique by themselves in as much as he had brought with him the latest experiences of the war from his tour of the European countries. He dilated at length on the Russian Revolution, the Irish Revolution, the Turkish Revolution and the first War of India's Independence of 1857. His great personality, and his vast experience of modern military warfare had a great effect on the members of the I.N.A. They found, the real Commander that would lead them to victory had at long last arrived.

Besides delivering speeches, Netaji also gave many press conferences, attended by Indian, Japanese, Chinese, Siamese, German, Italian

and other ~~journalists~~ <sup>men</sup>. His profound knowledge, his ~~to the point~~ <sup>point</sup> and definite replies and reactions to questions put to him by the correspondents, and his keen sense of the value of the publicity and propaganda always created a good impression on all

### The Marvellous Response of the poor.

The immediate effects of Netaji's speeches had been tremendous, on all and sundry. Every one—man and woman—young and old, wanted to respond to the clarion call of Netaji. Every body came forward to sacrifice whatever he or she could in the cause of India's freedom. One thing however is worth mentioning. Although there was no Indian who did not come forward to attend Netaji's speeches and did not sacrifice for the cause, ~~but~~ the response from the poor was simply marvellous. The Labourers and the Gwalas of Malaya and Thailand, the labourers and rickshaw pullers of Burma and the poor Indians of other regions in East Asia, indeed, stole a march over the rich Indians. They deserve a special mention and praise. They were the first to mobilize themselves in toto according to the instructions of Netaji. <sup>en</sup>

At mass meetings, addressed by Netaji, these poor folks would come most humbly and give their all to Netaji. It was indeed a touching sight to see thousands of them coming with their small boxes, containing ~~earnings~~ <sup>savings</sup> of their lives, and putting the same at the feet of their Leader. Netaji would be overwhelmed with feelings and emotion at their sacrifice, and would personally embrace them, and ask the richer folks to-

emulate them. The Gwalas of Thailand and Malaya were so anxious to do their best for India's independence that they would contribute whatever they had, would place their cattle at the disposal of the Indian Independence League and would press Netaji to accept them as recruits for the I. N. A., and to enable them to fight for India's independence.

It was these Gwalas, who came mostly from U.P. (those in Thailand mostly come from the district of Gorakhpur) and the Punjab, and the labourers, who came mostly from South India who made the movement such a strong, vast and tremendous organisation.

The rich also did not lag behind. Or rather, the rich too gradually came forward in thousands and contributed very handsomely to the movement.

At mass meetings Netaji would be profusely garlanded and later on these garlands would be auctioned and would fetch sums that were never below one lakh.

### The I.N.A. Under Netaji's Command.

When the heavy task of rousing the three millions of Indians in East Asia was finished, Netaji devoted himself to the task of overhauling and reorganising the Indian Independence movement in East Asia.

He had already become the President of the Indian Independence League. Now, due to overwhelming pressure from all ranks of the I.N.A. and the general public of East Asia, Netaji assented to become the Supreme Commander of the I.N.A. as well. Taking over the

Command on 25th August, 1943, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose issued the following special order of the Day to the officers and men of the Azad Hind Fauj.

**"SPECIAL ORDER OF THE DAY"**

BY

**SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE**

Supreme Commander Azad Hind Fauj  
(Indian National Army)

In the interests of the Indian Independence Movement and of the Azad Hind Fauj, I take over the direct command of our Army from this day.

This is for me a matter of joy and pride because for an Indian, there can be no greater honour than to be the Commander of India's Army of Liberation. But I am conscious of the magnitude of the task that I have undertaken and I feel weighed down with a sense of responsibility. I pray that God may give me the necessary strength to fulfil my duty to Indians, under all circumstances, however, difficult or trying they may be.

I regard myself as the servant of 38 crores of my countrymen, who profess different religious faiths. I am determined to discharge my duties in such a manner that the interests of these 38 crores may be safe in my hands and every single Indian will have reason to put complete trust in me. It is only on the basis of undiluted nationalism and of perfect justice and impartiality that India's Army of Liberation can be built up.

In the coming struggle for the emancipation of our mother-land, for the establishment of a Government of free India, based on the good-will of 38 crores of Indians and for the creation of a permanent army which will guarantee Indian Independence for all times, the Azad Hind Fauj has a vital role to play. To fulfil this role, we must weld ourselves into an army that will have only one goal, namely the freedom of Indians and only one will namely to do or die in the cause of India's freedom. When we stand, the Azad Hind Fauj has to be like a wall of granite ; when we march, the Azad Hind Fauj has to be like a steam-roller.

Our task is not an easy one ; the war will be long and hard, but I have complete faith in the justice and in the invincibility of our cause. 38 crores of human beings who form about one-fifth of the human race, have a right to be free and they are now prepared to pay the price of freedom. There is consequently no power on earth that can deprive us of our birth right of liberty any longer.

Comrades, Officers and men, with your unstinted support and unflinching loyalty the Azad Hind Fauj will become the instrument of India's Liberation. Ultimate Victory will certainly be ours, I assure you. Our work has already begun.

X With the slogan " On to Delhi " on our lips, let us continue to labour and to fight till our National Flag flies over the Viceroy's House in New Delhi, and the Azad Hind Fauj holds its victory parade inside the ancient Red Fortress of

the Indian Metropolis.

General H.Q. (Sd) Subhas Chandra Bose,  
Indian National Army, Supreme Commander,  
25, August, 1943. (Sipah Salar).

As soon as Netaji took over the command of the I. N. A. a new wave of enthusiasm could be seen throughout the Army. Prisoners of war from various camps began to swell the ranks of the I.N.A.

Besides the prisoners of war, civilian Indians from throughout East Asia started enrolling themselves in the I.N.A. In 1942, before the crisis in the organisation there had been a calling up of civil volunteers for the I. N. A., and a very large number of them had enlisted. But owing to the indifferent attitude of the Japanese, and obstacles put by them on the way of getting recruits, the scheme could not succeed. Now, when Netaji came, the civil recruitment was revived and many training camps were opened in Malaya with a total capacity of training nearly 7,000 recruits at one time. Civilians came in large numbers to offer themselves as recruits for the I. N. A. It was very difficult to cope with the tremendous rush of the people. Malaya, Thailand, Burma were dotted with I.N.A. camps at various places, and even then the recruits could not be accommodated due to the lack of so many facilities. However, for surplus volunteers part-time training was arranged and was imparted thrice a week.

Most of the civilians who offered themselves as volunteers for the I. N. A., were labourers,



mostly from South India, Gwalas mostly hailing from U.P. and the Punjab, and policemen, coming from the Punjab.

Every civilian volunteer had to fill a form at the time of recruitment (See Appendix 1). Also he had to take a pledge (See Appendix 11).

Within few months an army of 30,000 soldiers had thus been organised. All the men, however, could not be fully equipped and armed. Arms, ammunition and clothings were inadequate. However, one division was quite nicely organised. This Division No. 1 consisted of almost all the units of the First Hind Field Force Group plus a new Brigade, the Subhas Brigade. All the brigades of No. 1 Division were reorganised as follows :—

1. Subhas Brigade put under the Command of Maj. Gen. Shah Nawaz.
2. Gandhi Brigade, was put under the Command of Col. I.J. Kiani.
3. Azad Brigade, was put under the Command of Col. Gulzara Singh.
4. Nehru Brigade, was put under the Command of Col. G. S. Dhillon.

The special Service Group was renamed as the No. 1 Bahadur Group, put under the Command of Col. Burhanuddin and No. 2 Bahadur Group put the Command of Major Fateh Khan. The duties of the Bahadur Group included patrolling into enemy territory, sabotage, infiltration, propaganda among enemy troops and bringing the news regarding the enemy movements.

The Intelligence Group was put under the Command of Col. S. A. Malik. This Group also carried on the same work which the Bahadur Group did. But the members of this Group went deeper into the enemy lines than those of the Bahadur Group.

Later on two more Divisions were organised No. 2 and No. 3. After Division No. 1 was sent to the Assam Front, No. 2 Division was despatched to Rangoon area, Division No. 3 was however throughout the war in Malaya. This Division consisted mainly of the civilian recruits.

Besides, two officers' training schools were opened—one in Singapore and the other at Kambe near Rangoon in Burma. These schools turned out thousands of young officers who later played a very important and heroic role on the borders of India and Burma.

### **The Azad Hind Sangh.**

Behind the columns of the warriors of the Azad Hind Fauj was the organisation of the Indian Independence League or the Azad Hind Sangh, which was reorganised vitally along with the A. H. Fauj. Within a very short space of time a net work of its branches could be seen in Malaya, Thailand, Burma, the Andamans, Java, Sumatra, Celebes, Borneo, the Philippines, China and Japan. The Headquarters of the I. I. L. remained in Singapore, till they were shifted to Rangoon in early January, 1945. A Rear Headquarters however continued to function in Singapore.

Each of the country mentioned above had a Territorial Committee of its own. This Committee was directly under the control of the Headquarters of the Sangh. And this Territorial Committee controlled all its branches in its province. The Headquarters of the Azad Hind Sangh consisted of more than 15 branches, the main being the Departments of 1. Supply. 2. Finance, 3. Audit. 4. Publicity, Press and Propaganda. 5. Women's affairs. 6. Recruitment and Training 7. Branches 8. Social and Welfare, 9. Education.

The Territorial Committees too consisted of these departments. It was through these Territorial Committees that the Azad Hind Movement functioned. The Fund Committees set up by the Headquarters and the Purchasing Commissions sent by the Supply Department of the Headquarters functioned through these Territorial Committees and achieved the desired and set objectives.

The following are the descriptions of each of the Territorial Committees functioning in all the countries of East Asia.

#### (a) Malaya.

Soon after Netaji arrived, the Malayan Territorial Committee and the local branches of the Indian Independence League were organised. Mr. J. A. Thitty was made the Chairman of the Territorial Committee. Other prominent men included Dr. N. K. Menon (Penang), Mr Chidambaram (Singapore) Brahmchari Kailasham, Dr. Lakshamaiyer (Kuala Lumpur). Mr. A. Yellapa (Singapore)





*The I. N. A. Slogan.*

**Dr. Mrs. Lakshmi Swaminathan and others.**

A total of 70 branches with a membership of over two lakhs were organised.

*Recruitment* :—The first and foremost work done by the organisation in Malaya after Netaji's arrival, was the recruitment of civilians as volunteers for the I. N. A. and the I. I. L. Many recruiting centres were opened throughout Malaya, and many training camps were also opened. These camps were the Swaraj Institute, Penang, Azad School Singapore, BYTC (Bharat Youth Training Camps) Kuala Lumpur, Training Centres at Ipoh, Seremban and Selatar.

All these camps were put under the charge of Lt. Col. Ehsan Qadir.

More than 20,000 Indians, mostly labourers and Gwalas volunteered themselves as recruits for the I. N. A., but these camps did not have capacity to accommodate more than 7,000 trainees.

*Finance* :—The movement was financed only by Indian money. Millions of dollars were collected during Netaji's tours, and by the Finance Department. Many an Indian responded to the call of Total Mobilisation literally. There were many, mostly poor folks, who offered their belongings as well as themselves for the cause of India's freedom. Only on one occasion, that is, in January, 1945, 4 million dollars were collected in Malaya within two weeks. The total amount collected in Malaya ran into tens of millions of dollars.

*Publicity and Propaganda* :—This Department

of the Malayan Territorial Committee was actually amalgamated with the same Department of the I. I. L. Headquarters, which was at Singapore at the time of Netaji's arrival. Even after the Headquarters was shifted to Rangoon, this department remained under the control of the Rear Headquarters of the I. I. L., at Singapore. The object was to carry on co-ordinated publicity and propaganda from all centres of the I. I. L. Shri S. A. Ayer was the Secretary of this Department till the formation of the Azad Hind Government when he was made Minister for the same.

Two radio programmes used to be put up by this Department, namely I. I. L. Headquarters Radio (renamed as Azad Hind Government Headquarters Radio, after the formation of the Government.) and the Indian National Army Radio.

The Press section of the Department carried on the publication of many dailies and weeklies, Government Gazettes and other publications. M. Sivaram was its Director. The dailies were "Azad Hind", English, "Azad Hind" Roman Hindustani "Swatantra Bharatam" Tamil and Malayam, and "Purna Swaraj" (Tamil), Penang. The weeklies included "Awaz-a-Hind" and some others in Roman Hindustani and Tamil.

### **Shri S. A. Ayer.**

The Secretary of one of the most important Departments of the I.I.L. Headquarter and later Minister of the same Department in the Azad Hind Government, was Shri S. A. Ayer, who

started his journalistic career in 1918 as sub-editor and junior reporter in the Bombay Office of the Associated Press of India. In 1926 he was appointed Editor, Reuter—A.P. office in Calcutta. He worked on the editorial staff of the Reuters in London from November 1932 to April 1933. From 1936 to 1939, Sri Ayer worked as Manager of the Reuter—A.P. office in Rangoon. After the outbreak of the last European War, he was appointed Reuter's Special Correspondent at Bangkok (Thailand). He held this position till the East Asia War broke out and that country came under the Japanese.

After the establishment of the I. I. L. Headquarters in Bangkok Mr. Ayer joined the Headquarters in July, 1942, as incharge of the Radio Propaganda, under Sri K. P. K. Menon, a member of the Council of Action. When the Headquarters was shifted to Singapore in February, 1943, Sri Ayer also went there and was in May, 1943, made Secretary of the Department of Publicity, Press and Propaganda of the I. I. L. Headquarters. In October, 1943, when Netaji formed the Provisional Government of Azad Hind Sri Ayer was made the Minister of Publicity and Propaganda. In January, 1944, he went to Burma along with the Headquarters of the I. I. L. and the A. H. Government. In Burma, Sri Ayer was appointed as Secretary to the Azad Hind Government, in addition to his being Minister of Publicity and Propaganda. Later on he was made a member of the War Council.

In April, 1945, he evacuated Rangoon



along with Netaji and the other Cabinet members, and went to Bangkok and Singapore. He left Singapore by air along with Netaji on 16th August, 1945 enroute to Japan via Bangkok and Saigon. From Saigon Netaji left by one plane, and Sri Ayer by another. Sri Ayer reached Japan on the 22nd of August. After three days of his arrival he came to know of the tragedy, which overtook Netaji's plane. 1945

On 19th November, last year, Mr. Ayer left Tokyo by air and reached India on 21st November. Arriving in Delhi the next day, he was detained in the Red Fort for two days, after which he was released unconditionally. He is now amidst us taking an active part in the relief work for the I. N. A. personnel.

*Relief and Social Welfare* :—Along with its political aspect, the Indian Independence League also carried out a programme of relief and social service. Large funds were spent by the Malayan organisation for relief work among the Indians who were hard hit by the war. Particularly among the labour population of Malaya, the distress was acute, and the various branches of the League appointed doctors and organised relief centres, where food and medicines were given free to all deserving cases. The biggest relief camp in Malaya was at Kuala Lumpur where at one time there used to be a daily average of over 1,000 men, women and children, and the monthly expenses came to over 75,000 dollars.

A programme of settling Indians on land was also undertaken by the Malayan League. Over 2,000 acres of land, mostly virgin jungle land,

were cleared and allotted to the Indian settlers for planting.

The League also undertook the education of Indian children. National Schools were opened and run by the I. I. League. Hindustani—in Roman script—was taught in all Schools and more progress was made towards the study of Hindustani during the three years of the war than ever before.

*The Death Valley* :—By the way it will not be out of place to mention the humiliating and painful conditions which thousands of our compatriots had to undergo on the Thai-Burma Railway during the Japanese regime. This Thai-Burma border can very adequately be termed as "Death Valley".

Soon after the Japanese occupation of Siam and Malaya, they made a project of building a railway line connecting Siam and Burma. For that they needed industrious and efficient labour. The Siamese and Malayan labourers did not suit them, because they were too "lazy". The Chinese labourers though hardworking were not reliable. The only choice was left for the Indian labour, and the only place from where they could be provided was Malaya. Hence the Japanese ~~did not get~~ Indian labourer to work out their proposed project. To achieve this end, the Japanese used many ways. One of them was of course a black spot upon some of the Indians in Malaya. These Indians were ~~even~~ holding good positions in the Indian Independence League. These selfish Indians just to curry favour with the Japanese, helped them in

recruiting the Indian labourers from Malaya for the construction of the Thai-Burma Railway. The poor labourers who mostly came from South India, were ~~given~~ <sup>made</sup> to believe that they were being recruited for the fight for India's freedom. This mostly happened before Netaji appeared in the arena of the I. I. L. politics. After Netaji's arrival, this process was brought to a standstill though not completely.

Yet, those who had already been recruited could not be snatched back from the cruel and devilish hands, controlling the construction of the road. There is no doubt that the railway was used also by the Indian National Army while enroute to Burma from Malaya. But the conditions, under which our compatriots numbering about 100,000 had to work were not only horrible but also ~~hell-like~~ <sup>hellish</sup>. About 85,000 of them met a slow, tortuous and horrible death. And those who lived through became disabled and invalids as a result of malnutrition, beating, jungle-sicknesses, cancers and so on.

### (b) Thailand.

After Netaji's arrival in East Asia, the Azad Hind Sangh, Thailand Territorial Committee, was reorganised. Sri A.M. Sahay, who later on became the Secretary to the Azad Hind Government, with Ministerial rank, was appointed the Chairman. With the reorganisation and as a result of Netaji's clarion call for Total mobilisation for the expected armed fight for India's liberation, Indians of Thailand threw themselves wholeheartedly into the movement.

Soon after that when the Azad Hind Government was formed, Sardar Ishar Singh the most prominent among Indians in Thailand was made the Chairman of the Thailand Territorial Committee of the Azad Hind Sangh.

### **Sardar Ishar Singh.**

Sardar Ishar Singh hails from the village of Philoke, District Gujranwala (Punjab). He belongs to a family who has always contributed its bit to India's fight for freedom. During the World War 1914-18, his uncle, late Sardar, Budha Singh, who was in those days in Bangkok, was instrumental in helping Lala Har Dyal and his comrades in making their escapes good. When the war ended, he was arrested, insulted and transported for life to the Andamans, where he died as a result of maltreatment.

Sardar Ishar Singh has been taking interest in the national movement ever since his student days. He attended a few sessions of the Congress. Before the outbreak of the East Asia War, he was the managing proprietor of one of the leading Indian business houses in Bangkok.

When the Indian National Council was formed in Bangkok he was one among those who, along with Pandit Raghunath Shastri, took a leading part in building up the organisation.

At the Bangkok Conference, Sardar Ishar Singh was one of the prominent delegates representing the Indian community in Thailand. When the Indian Independence League was established, Sardarji was appointed the Social and Welfare Secretary of the Thailand Committee.

He threw his heart and soul in the movement, and became one of the two most important and popular men among Indians in Thailand, the other being Pandit Raghunath Shastri.

Just before Netaji's arrival, there was prevailing a sort of pessimism among the Indian community. The credit of keeping up the morale of Indians in Thailand goes to Sardarji and Panditji.

In the reorganised Thailand Territorial Committee after Netaji's arrival, Ishar Singh continued to serve as the Social and Welfare Secretary. Now, he was more active than ever before. The result was that when the formation of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind was announced, Sardar Ishar Singh was appointed as one of the Advisors to the Government. He also succeeded Sri A. M. Sahay, as chairman of the I. I. L., Thailand Territorial Committee. Pandit R. N. Shastri was appointed his Chief Advisor.

Ishar Singh carried on his new and heavy duties very successfully and admirably, for he had a strong cabinet. It consisted of 14 members, including Pandit R. N. Shastri, Advisor and later Finance Secretary, Dr. P. N. Sharma, Publicity, Press and Propaganda Secretary, Mr. B. A. Kapasi, Supply Secretary, Mr. Harbans Lal, General Secretary, Maulvi Ali Akbar, joint Secretary, Maulvi Abdul Magaddas, Branches Secretary, Col. G. R. Nagar, Recruitment and Training Secretary, and others.

Sardar Ishar Singh was later on, in recognition of the services rendered by him and by

**Indians in Thailand, appointed by 'Netaji a Minister in the Azad Hind Government.**

*Organisation.*—As a result of the enthusiastic response to the call of their Leader, who had given them as to all Indians, a new life and a new awakening, Indians in Thailand came forward and rallied under the Tri-Colour banner of the I.I.L., To cope with this enthusiasm, 26 branches of the I.I.L. were established throughout Thailand.

*Funds* :—Indians in Thailand poured out all for the purse of the I.I.L. From millionaires down to the Gwalas there was hardly any body left who did not contribute towards the funds of the I.I.L. There were many cases, when the Gwalas and the watchmen offered the savings, they had collected after years of sweat and toil, for the freedom movement. More than 15 million Ticals were collected by the Finance Department.

*Supply* :—During the war Thailand was the only country in East Asia, where such materials as are necessary for carrying out a war, were available more than in other countries of East Asia. The I.I.L. organisation made full use of that fact. And a constant stream of supplies cloth, medicines, shoes, grain etc. to the Azad Hind Fauj in Burma was kept flowing. A shoe factory and a milk condensing factory were organised under the management of the I.I. L.

*Recruitment and Training* :—Though Indians in Thailand were much less in number than those in Malaya and Burma, yet they provided a

large number of volunteers for the Indian National Army, and other auxiliary organisations. Over one thousand of them enrolled themselves for the active service. The Department of recruiting and Training of the I. I. L., therefore organised a training camp at Chholburi about 70 Kilometers from Bangkok. This Camp had the capacity of training about 1,500 recruits. Recruits from Indo-China and Malaya also came and received their training at this Camp. Major Ganeshi Lal, the Commandant of the Camp, deserves due praise for training the youths into fine soldiers.

*Publicity and Propaganda.*—This department a self entity in itself was very well organised. It carried on a well systemised campaign through radio, papers and demonstration. The Azad Hind Radio with one and a half hour's daily transmission used to be conducted by this department. The transmission included a news bulletin, a commentary and a talk daily, plays and musical programmes occasionally and so on.

The "Azad Hind", first weekly, and then daily, the official organ of the I. I. L., used to be issued by this department.

Many publications like "Poverty amidst Plenty", "Netaji Speaks", "India fight on", and others were issued by the Department.

Dr. P. N. Sharma and Mr. Kam Uddin Hakimji deserve praise and credit for the efficient working of the Department. It was Dr. Sharma, who organised this Department so efficiently.

A free lance writer, Dr. Sharma always laid stress on the vital problems of the peoples of India, vis-a-vis their struggle for political independence, in his radio talks and editorials. It will not be out of place to say that this Department under Dr. Sharma carried on the independent policy of the Azad Hind Government, and no interference of whatever nature with regard to policy, from the Japanese side, was ever tolerated.

*Social Welfare and Relief.*—Under this Department the I.I.L., Thailand, organised and conducted a fully equipped hospital at Bangkok. Here medicines and medical aid were freely provided to the needy among Indians. This hospital was in 1944 destroyed as a result of the bombardment by the allied planes,

Besides, free food was provided to many Indian destitutes and disabled persons, who had been brought by the Japanese from Malaya as labourers for the construction of the Thai-Burma Railway.

The education of Indian children was also under-taken by this Department. A national school was opened and the education imparted was on the same lines as that in Malaya.

### (c) Burma

After a few weeks of Netaji's arrival, the Burma Territorial Committee of the Indian Independence League was also over-hauled. It has already been mentioned that Syt. Badri Prasad, the young and enthusiastic Chairman of the Burma Territorial Committee was, as a result of



the crisis, deported to Bangkok by the Japanese. In his place, Mr. Karim Ghani was made the Chairman, with Mr. G. A. Qureshi as the General Secretary.

With the advent of Netaji, the Burma Territorial Committee was reorganised on new lines. It was made to function under the Headquarters of the I. I. L., which was shifted to Rangoon in December, 1943. A special department, the Burma Branches Department was opened, which was to control all the branches in Burma, and Mr. Karim Ghani was made the Secretary of this Department. Other prominent men of Burma who took a leading part in the movement after the arrival of Netaji were Mr. A. Mahboob, M. Bashir, M. Bal, Mr. Dosbi, K. Pillai, Mr. Parmanand and others.

Over 100 branches of the League were established and organised throughout Burma.

There was one Northern Burma Territorial Committee of the I. I. L., with its Head Office at Mandalay. Mr. Gopal Singh was its General Secretary. He was an earnest worker, a stern disciplinarian and an efficient organiser. Another section of the organisation was the Delta Territorial Committee, with its Headquarter at Akyab. Mr. Sultan Ahmed was its leader.

*Finance*—The response of Indians in Burma to Netaji's clarion call for total mobilisation had been simply marvellous. In total over 80 million of rupees were collected by the Finance Department. There are many cases when Indians in Burma placed everything they possessed at the

disposal of the I. I. League and the Azad Hind Government. The prominent among them were Mr. A. Habib and Mrs. Butai, both of whom were awarded the medal of Sevak-a-Hind for the services they rendered to the Azad Hind movement.

### Mr. A. Habib

Mr. Habib has had a remarkable career. Years ago he went to Burma as a petty shop-assistant on a nominal pay with boarding and lodging. In course of time he started a small business in perfumery of his own. Luck favoured him and his business flourished, wherein Mr. Habib began dealing in lakhs. Till the arrival of Netaji he was merely interested in his business. He had, however made small contributions to the funds of the Indian Independence movement, which had sprung up after the outbreak of the East Asia War.

After Netaji arrived, a remarkable transformation came over Mr. Habib. He attended meetings addressed by Netaji and he was so inspired that he straight away decided to plunge headlong into the movement. He began by announcing donation of 2 Lakhs and 3 Lakhs at a time, and eventually became a total mobiliser. He not only donated his all to the Azad Hind Government, but also placed himself at the service of the Government. His total contributions amounted to One Crore and Three Lakhs of rupees. His services were so remarkable that his actions, came to be known as "Habib Mixture". Netaji prescribed this mixture to all the rich Indians of East Asia. In recognition

of his services to the Azad Hind movement, Netaji decorated Mr. Habib with "Tamgha-a-Sevak-a-Hind." He was later made Chairman of the Supply Board.

At the end of 1944, Netaji Fund Committee was established with Sri M. Bashir as its Vice-President. Indians generously contributed towards its funds and translated the slogan of "Karo Sab Nichhawar Bano Sab Faqir." into action.

*Recruiting and Training*—Over 6,000 Indians volunteered themselves as recruits for the I. N. A. and the I. I. L. Besides the O. T. S., at Kambe near Rangoon, there were four training camps in Burma with the capacity of training 3,000 soldiers at a time. There was also a Swaraj Young Men Training Institute, where training of special nature was imparted to the cadets.

*Supply*—A Supply Board was established with Sri Parmanand, Chairman of the Ziawadi branch of the I. I. L., as its president and Mr. A. Habib as its Secretary. Later on when Mr. Parmanand was made Minister of Supplies, Mr. Habib succeeded him.

*Publicity and Propaganda*—After the I. I. L., Headquarters were shifted to Rangoon, the Publicity and Propaganda Department came under the control of the Headquarters. The radio programmes were reorganised and the I. I. L., Headquarters Radio as well as the Azad Hind Government Headquarters Radio started functioning from the Rangoon Broadcasting Station.

Many papers like "Azad Hind" Daily, in English, Roman Hindustani, Urdu, Hindi, Tamil and Talugu were also started by this Department. Many pamphlets and books were also published.

*Social Welfare*—A number of free dispensaries were organised throughout Burma by the I. I. League.

The education of Indian children was undertaken in Burma as well. Altogether 65 Indian National Schools were opened and run by the Education Department of the League.

#### (d) Other Parts Of East Asia.

Similarly, the Indian Independence League organisation was overhauled in other parts of East Asia as well. As a result, men, money and materials were mobilised for the cause of India's Independence.

The branches of the League in Sumatra, Java and Borneo were controlled by the Rear—Headquarters of the I. I. L. at Singapore.

The I. I. L. branches in Java used to conduct the Azad Hind Radio from the Batavia Broadcasting Station.

From Borneo 280 men joined the I. N. A.

From Indo-China, Hongkong, Shanghai, the Philippines and Japan, a great number of Indian civilians volunteered themselves for the I. N. A. Especially the watchmen of Hongkong and Shanghai placed their belongings as well as themselves, at the disposal of the Azad Hind Movement.

The contributions from Indians in these areas

amounted to millions.

### **Azad Hind Government.**

By the middle of October, 1943, the stage was set up for the realisation of Netaji's promise and intention, expressed in his first Presidential address to the delegates of the Second Singapore Conference, held on 4th July, 1943. The League organisation was now overhauled and working very efficiently. Peoples' response to Netaji's call of Total Mobilisation had been more than expected. The I. N. Army was now moving onwards like a steam roller.

Hence on the historic day of 21st October, 43, a Conference of all the leaders of the Indian Independence League organisation throughout East Asia was held. During this Conference Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose made the revolutionary announcement of the formation of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind.

A special proclamation (see appendix iii) was read by Netaji, declaring the formation of the Arzi-Hakumate-e-Azad-Hind. Following were the members of the Azad Hind Government :—

Subhas Chandra Bose : Head of the State, Prime Minister, Minister of War and Foreign Affairs.

Capt. (now Lt. Col.) Dr. Lakshme : Minister for Woman's Organisations.

S. A. Ayer : Minister for Publicity and Propaganda.

Lt. Col. (now Maj. Gen.) A. C. Chatterji : Finance Minister.





*Sri N. Raghavan,  
Finance Minister of the  
Azad Hind Government*

**A. M. Sahay :** Secretary to the Cabinet, with Ministerial rank.

Representatives from the Army, with Ministerial ranks :—Lt. Col. Aziz Ahmed., Lt. Col. N. S. Bhagat, Lt. Col. J. K. Bhonsle, Lt. Col. Gulzara Singh; Lt. Col. M. Z. Qiani, Lt. Col. A. D. Lognadan, Lt. Col. Ehsan Qadir, Lt. Col. Shah Nawaz.

**Rash Behari Bose :** Supreme Advisor.

**Karim Ghani, Debnath Dass, D. M. Khan, A. Yallapa, J. Thivy, Sardar Ishar Singh—**Advisors

**A. N. Sircar :** Legal Advisor.

After the announcement Netaji and the members of the Cabinet, took oaths of allegiance (see appendix 4 and 5)

Within few days of the formation of the Arzi-Hakumat-a-Azad Hind, nine World powers recognized this Government as the *de facto* and *de jure* Independent Government of India. They were, Japan, Germany, Italy, Thailand, Burma, the Philippines, Manchuria, Nanking China and Croatia.

The recognition of the Provisional Government was not, however, followed by exchange of diplomatic representatives. Only as late as in 1945, a decision to exchange diplomatic representatives was arrived at between the Azad Hind Government and the Imperial Japanese Government. The latter sent Mr. Teruo Hachiya as their Minister to the Azad Hind Government.



But the end of the war did not allow them to have proper diplomatic relations.

However full facilities were accorded to the officials of the Indian Independence League, the I. N. A. and the Azad Hind Government by all the powers which had extended recognition to our Government, in the territories under their jurisdiction. For example, Sri A. C. N. Nambiar, Chief of the Azad Hind Organisation in Europe, and later a Minister of the Azad Hind Government, was always treated by the German and other European Governments as an official representative of the Free India Government.

Besides these nine powers, who extended recognition to our Government, there were other powers like of Eire (Irish Republic) and the Vatican who sent messages of felicitation and encouragement to the Azad Hind Government.

<sup>in Asia</sup>  
After the formation of the Azad Hind Hakumat, all Indians in East Asia as well as in Europe, henceforth became the citizens of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind.

It will not be out of place to mention here that soon after the formation of the Government, Netaji asked all Indians in East Asia to observe the 21st of every month as the Arzi Hakumat Day. The response to this call was simply admirable. On the 21st of every month, henceforth, the Indians throughout East Asia would gather and hold rallies. After the Headquarters of the Government were shifted to Rangoon, many changes also came into the personnel of the Government.

Early in 1940, Shri S. A. Ayer was in addition to his duties made the Secretary to the Cabinet, in place of Sri A. M. Sahay, who was made a Minister without portfolio. Later on Sardar Ishar Singh, Sri Karim Ghani, and Sri A. Yellapa were promoted to the ranks of Ministers. S. Ishar Singh, Minister without portfolio, Sri Karim Ghani, Minister without portfolio, and Sri A. Yellapa, Minister of Transports. Sri Parmanand and Sri N. Raghavan were also taken into the Cabinet, with portfolios of Supply and Finance respectively. Maj. General Chatterji was made Secretary of the War Council. Mr. Bashir was made an Advisor to the Government.

Meanwhile Col. Ehsan Qadir was made Minister for Man-power. In later days General Chatterji was made the Foreign Minister, the rank, which Netaji relinquished, and Mr. J. A. Thivy was also made a Minister.

These changes were brought about by Netaji, as and when he deemed them necessary, in view of the changing situation and so on.

### **Rani Of Jhansi Regiment And Its Commander.**

The city of Singapore had just witnessed an historic event on the 21st, of October, 1943. But the next day proved to be even more revolutionary. Everybody there was looking for a momentous event on that day. Not only Indians but Malays, Chinese, Japanese, and all others were rushing towards the High Street Camp, near the Cathay Building, where Netaji Subhas

Chandra Bose was to inaugurate a new camp—a camp not for men, but for women, for those women who had always even while outside India—lived under purdah, for those women who had never come out of the four walls of their residences.

At last that moment approached. A large crowd of Indians and other nationals had gathered around the camp. In the camp were Indian ladies smartly dressed in Military uniforms, with rifles on their shoulders. All of a sudden there was a stir, and the whole mass of humanity started shouting “Inqilab Zindabad”, “Azad Hind Zindabad” and “Netaji Zindabad”. The Leader had arrived. -

And so, the ex-purdah nashin women of India, gathered in the camp, fell in line. “Sawdhan” was the order from their Commander. Guard of Honour was presented to Netaji. Netaji then hoisted the Tricolour, while the women soldiers presented arms to the national banner.

The camp was inaugurated, and Netaji delivered one of his historic speeches. He said among many other things, “India’s women have always taken a leading part in deciding the destinies of the country.....In the recent past before the advent of the British rule in India, Ahilya Bai, Razia Bagum, Noor Jahan and Rani Bhawani of Bengal proved themselves among the ablest of administrators.....During the First War of India’s Independence in 1857, Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi led the forces of Indian revolution against the alien rule.....Rani

of Jhansi was defeated, but India can produce many Ranis of Jhansi.....Indian women in East Asia have now been organised and they should have a regiment of their own. This regiment will be the Rani of Jhansi Regiment., and will be an integral part of the Azad Hind Fauj."

It was <sup>on</sup> at this occasion that Netaji appointed the Minister Dr. Mrs. Lakshmi Swaminathan as commander of the newly organised Regiment.

The organisation of a women's brigade in the Azad Hind Fauj was for the whole world sensational news, and for the Indians another revolutionary step towards their goal of freedom. It attracted Indian women in all parts of East Asia. The recruitment was not limited from Malaya alone, but Indian women from Thailand and Burma also joined the ranks of the new Regiment. Later on another camp for the training of Indian women was opened at Rangoon. <sup>The total</sup> ~~reached more than~~ strength of the Brigade <sup>had</sup> ~~reached~~ more than 2,000. When one compares this number with the meagre population of Indians in East Asia, one is apt to admire the wonderful spirit of Indian women in responding to Netaji's call.

The training given to these soldiers covered all aspects. In the Military sphere they were trained for handling several weapons like pistol, rifles, machine-gun and brane gun. A good number of them were however trained as nurses and were attached to the medical units of the Azad Hind Fauj. Besides they arranged dramas. The most popular drama played by the

Rani of Jhansi soldiers was the "Rani Lakshmi Bai Jhansi" It was for the first time played in October, 1944, Lt. Gurupdesh Kaur acting as Rani Lakshmi Bai. It fetched tens of thousands of dollars.

The most heroic and death-defying part was played by those women soldiers who proceeded to the fighting lines in Burma. Their number exceeded 500. Most of them were medical nurses. These valiant fighters served in almost all the I. N. A. Hospitals in Burma. In Rangoon, Myang, Kalaw, Mawmyo, and in several other places were the I. N. A. Hospitals, and it was at these places that these fair fighters served their wounded and sick brothers of the Azad Hind Fauj. On many an occasion they distinguished themselves in bravery, efficiency, and death-defying acts in performing their duties. To mention only one occasion, when the British planes even defying the Red Cross marks, bombed the I. N. A. hospital at Myang, these Rani Jhansi soldiers did not lag behind in rushing aid to the victims. Netaji had always a word of praise for these heroes.

The most outstanding among them is of course their Chief Commander, Dr. Lakshmi. She has all along been in Burma. There was no front, which Capt. Lakshmi—afterwards Major, and now Lt. Col. Lakshmi—did not visit. During the earlier months of the last year she was the Commandant of the I. N. A. hospital at Kalaw. Later on when she was called back to Rangoon by Netaji, she left Kalaw but could not reach Rangoon as well. She was in jungles for

many days, facing not only the British guns, but ~~also~~ those of the retreating Japanese. It was somewhere in May last year, that the gallant Commandar was captured somewhere on the Taungoo-Mawchi road. She was taken to Rangoon. After few months' internment there, she was however allowed to practise. But her open defiance of the British orders and her activities resulting in relief to the suffering and needy I. N. A. men made the British military administration to suspect her. Hence her re-arrest and transportation to Kalaw in the Southern Shan States.

It was in March <sup>1946</sup> this year that Col. Lakshmi was released from Kalaw and brought back to India, where her countrymen received her with ovations of jubilation and respect. She is now again busy with the work, which had been left unfinished.

### Other Auxiliary Organisations

(a) *Azad Hind Dal*.—This Dal was organised with the object of preparing a corps which would administer the area liberated by the Indian National Army. It was composed of mainly civilians, who had been given training in civil administration in Singapore and then in Rangoon. The Chief of the Dal was Col. Ehsan Qadir the Minister of Man-power. The Headquarters of the corps were in Maymyo, in Northern Burma.

The total number of the corps was over a thousand men. After the I. N. A. entered India, many units of the Dal were sent to the liberated

areas, and the Dal men went as far as Morey near Palel. There was a Dal camp at Kalewa.

Just before the retreat from Imphal, these people were called back. On their way back many died of malaria and dysentery. Many more died at Madya—22 miles due north of Mandalay, where there was a Dal Relief camp and a hospital.

(i) *The Azad Hind Bank.*—In April, 1944, the Provisional Government of Azad Hind organised its own bank, the National Bank of Azad Hind. The Head Office of the Bank was at 94, Park Road, Rangoon. This was the Bank, which, on behalf of the Azad Hind Government, made collections, which were in cash as well as in kind.

The Azad Hind Bank was a share holder Bank with a Capital of 50 lakhs. The amount deposited by private individuals totalled about 35 lakhs.

The contributions, which were collected by the Finance Department of the Indian Independence League, and which amounted to over Rs. 15 crores in Burma, 5 crores in Malaya, 15 millions in Thailand, were deposited in the Azad Hind Bank. It was through this bank that the expenses of the Indian National Army and the Indian Independence League used to be met.

In Burma there were three branches of the Bank. Two in Rangoon itself and one at Taungie in the Southern Shan States.

It will not be out of place to mention

here, when last year on the 15th of May, the Bank was sealed by the British occupation authorities, there was in the Bank a sum of Rs. 30 lakhs of cash balance.

(c) *The Balak and Balika Senas.* One of the most brilliant achievements of Netaji and the Azad Hind Movement was the organisation of the young boys and girls throughout East Asia, Keeping in view that "Today's child is tomorrow's man.", Netaji started these organisations "The Balak and Balika Senas." In Burma, Thailand and Malaya, all the young boys and girls from the ages of 6 to 14 were organised.

One could see batches of these young folks, marching into the streets with Tricolour banners in their hands and singing national songs. They would inject new spirit and a new life into the Indian community.

Col. Inayat Ullah Hassan was Incharge of the Bal Sena throughout East Asia. He issued pamphlets and a paper as well in this connection.

The most brilliant part, which these young boys of the Bal Sena played was after the Japanese surrender. In Rangoon and other places, these boys carried on processions with big tricolour banners. It was these boys that made a majority of the Indian troops of the British occupation forces "Jai Hind" minded. They kept the torch of Azad Hind burning and it still burns.

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## **CHAPTER IX**

### **Flag of Freedom Over**

### **The Free India Territories**

### **Greater East Asia Conference**

Soon after the formation of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and the opening of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment camp, Netaji left Singapore and went to Bangkok at the end of October, 1943. At Bangkok he was the Thai State's guest. From Bangkok he along with his Ministerial Staff left for an unknown destination, and it was only on the 2nd of November that we came to know that Netaji had reached Tokyo and that a conference of Official representatives of all the States of Greater East Asia was scheduled to be held on the 4th of November. 1943

Netaji was accompanied by Maj. General J. K. Bhonsle, Chief of Staff, Mr. A. M. Sahay, Col D. S. Raju. and Mr. (Now Lt. Col) A Hassan.

At this Conference were present the representatives of Japan, Thailand, China, Manchuria, the Philippines and Burma. General Hiddeki Tojo, the Prime Minister of Japan, H. R. H. Prince Von Vaidya-kan, special envoy of the Prime Minister of Thailand, Mr. Wang Ching Wai, the President of Nanking China, General Chang Ching Hui, Prime Minister of Manchuria, Mr. Jose P. Laurel, President of the Philippines Republic, and Dr. Ba Maw, Head of the State of

Burma, headed the delegations of their respective countries.

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was present in person only as an observer.

Conference was held for three days. In course of their speeches delivered at the Conference, all the representatives of the countries of Greater East Asia congratulated Netaji on the formation of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind. They also pledged that their countries and their Governments would extend all possible aid to the Azad Hind Government in its armed struggle to achieve the complete freedom of India. They expressed their hopes that the Indian National Army of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind would launch upon its crusade against the British in India and would successfully achieve its object.

It was in the course of his speech during this very conference that General Hiddeki Tojo made the historic declaration of Japan conceding the islands of Andamans and the Nicobars to the Provisional Government of free India. He also reiterated Japan's policy vis-a-vis India, saying that Japan had no territorial, political, economic or any other designs against India.

The speech delivered by Netaji—the most impressive and imposing personality in the conference was one of the most brilliant speeches he has made. Besides thanking Japan, Germany and all the other allied countries of Europe and East Asia for the help and co-operation extended by them to Indians abroad in their struggle to supplement the freedom battle within

India, Netaji also assured all those present that Indians would prove equal to the occasion. He stated that the Army of India's Liberation was already on the move and would soon be face to face with the enemies of India's freedom. He also clearly stated that Indian struggle for freedom had not started with the out-break of the war. He said that the battle was on for the last many generations and would not end unless complete victory resulting in complete and unadulterated independence of India was achieved.

At this conference a Pacific Charter, accepting the complete freedom of all the units of Greater East Asia, pooling all their economic resources for successfully carrying on the Greater East Asia War and organising a joint defence system was framed.

After the Conference was over, a big rally was held at the Hibya Park Tokyo to welcome Netaji. It was attended by hundreds of thousands of Japanese. General Tojo, Field Marshal Sugiyama, Japanese Chief of Staff, and other dignitaries were also present. In response to the imperial reception accorded to him, Netaji addressed the vast gathering in Hindustani. He thanked the Japanese people and their Government for extending help and sympathy to the cause of India and expressed that India would always remain indebted to Japan for that help and sympathy. He also foresaw a closer Indo-Japanese friendship and good will after the achievement of India's freedom.

During his sojourn in Tokyo Netaji was

received in audience by the Emperor of Japan. Tennesheka received Netaji as Head of the Free India Government, and it was for the first time in the histories of both India and Japan that Heads of both the States met as free Sovereigns.

On his return journey from Japan, Netaji visited Shanghai, Nanking, Manila and Bangkok. At all these places he was a guest of State, and was everywhere accorded grand reception by the respective Governments. Indians in these places were over jubilant to see their Leader with their own eyes and listen to him. A new wave of enthusiasm caught the Indian residents of these areas. It was for the first time that a free Indian leader had visited these places and that ~~also~~ as a guest of State. The local inhabitants of all these countries started respecting the Indians, who were all along, being humiliated and insulted by them due to the cunning policy of the British Imperialism.

While in Shanghai, Netaji addressed over the Shanghai Radio a message to Generallissimo Chiangkai Shek of China, asking him to come to terms with the Japanese who, he said, were prepared to withdraw their armed forces from China in case an honourable agreement was reached. Netaji explained that that was the only way to save the millions of Chinese and other Asiatic people from the horrors of the existing modern war. He also stressed that an honourable agreement between China and Japan would hasten the liberation of the hundreds of millions of the peoples of Asia from the bondage

of white domination. He also expressed his belief that unless China and India were independent of the Anglo-American domination, there would be no peace and happiness in the World. Netaji however expressed his fear that the way in which China was conducting her war against Japan, was detrimental to China's sovereignty and integrity, and would, in case Japan was defeated lead to the complete domination of China by the American economic and military Imperialism.

### **Shaheed and Swaraj Islands**

Netaji returned to his Headquarters at Singapore during the first week of December. Meanwhile the preparations for the transfer of the Headquarters of the Indian Independence League, Azad Hind Government and Azad Hind Fauj to Burma were complete. During the same time the islands of the Andamans and Nicobars were handed over to the Provisional Government.

On 30th of December, Netaji accompanied by Sri A. M. Sahay, Lt. Col. Ehsan Qadir, Lt. Col. D. S. Raju and Major B. S. Rawat, paid a flying visit to the newly acquired islands. It was the first bit of the free India Territory. At Port Blair, the Capital of the Andamans, Netaji hoisted the Indian National Tricolour over the Government building. It was a great impressive and historic ceremony. On this occasion Netaji renamed the Island of Andamans as the Shaheed Islands and those of Nicobar as the Swaraj Islands.

The ceremony over, Netaji visited the Cellular

Jail building where Indian political prisoners used to pass the precious years of their lives.

Colonel (now Maj. General) A. D. Loganadan, Minister of State, was appointed by Netaji, the Chief Commissioner of the Shaheed and Swaraj Islands.

Both the Shaheed and the Swaraj Islands were officially handed over by the Japanese to the Azad Hind Government on 17th February, when a ceremony was held at the Headquarters of the Indian Independence League at Port Blair on the same day.

The local administration of the Islands was handed over to the Azad Hind Chief Commissioner. However the defence of the islands remained in the hands of the Japanese, due to strategical and technical reasons the education Department of General Loganadan's administration carried out a mass scale educational programme among the Indian population which numbered about 16,000.

Here it will not be out of place to mention the Estate of Ziawadi, 150 miles north of Rangoon, which came under the Tricolour flag of the free India Government. This Estate with an area of 50 sq. miles a population of about 15,000 inhabitants mostly Indians, belonged to an Indian who was at that time in India. Sri Parmanand and Sri B. Prasad were the managers of the Estate. They handed it over to the Provisional Government of Free India, the Japanese Government, who by right of conquest, were in possession of all Burma including the

Ziawadi Estate, recognized that the Azad Hind Government were the masters of the Estate and that the Estate was a part of the free India territory.

The Estate had on it a Sugar factory and various other means of production, agriculture or otherwise.

The Azad Hind Government carried on the administration of the Estate through Azad Hind Dal. There were several Departments, including Revenue, Police, P. W. D. Justice, both Civil and Criminal, and so on. Besides, there was an I. N. A. Training Camp for volunteers.

An I. N. A. Base Hospital was also located there.



***I. N. A. men in Action near Imphal.***





## CHAPTER X

### The First Offensive of the Azad Hind Fauj

Three days after the formation of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind, that is on the 24th of October, 1943, exactly at 5 minutes past the zero hour (mid night) Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, in the capacity of the Head of the State, declared war against Britain and the United States on behalf of Azad Hind, and soon after that the Units of the Army of India's Liberation started moving towards Burma.

By the time the Headquarters of the Azad Hind Government, Azad Hind Fauj and the Azad Hind League were transferred to Burma in early January 1944, the strength of the Army had reached 40,000. Half of the Army was left behind in Malaya while the other half was taken to Burma. This consisted of No. 1 Division, its Auxiliary Units and other Units. The First Division under the Command of Maj. General M. Zaman Kiani was completely ready for action.

The Units which went to Burma mostly went on foot. They out-jumped the Japanese in covering the distances during their long marches towards Burma. The Jungle routes from Malaya leading through Thailand to Burma were thundering with the shouts of "Jai Hind," "On To Delhi" and the sweet music of "Sudh Sukh Chain Ki Barkha Barse.", the national anthem of Azad Hind, could be heard in every nook and corner.

## The Arakan Campaign

The advancing Units of the Azad Hind Fauj were now proceeding towards the Indo-Burma borders at a breakneck speed and by the end of January 1944 had come into contact with the Units of the Allies.

On February the 4th/ the men of the Azad Hind Fauj fired their first shot and actually went on the offensive against the British and hoisted the Indian National Tri-colour over the hills of the Arakan.

The offensive of the 4th of February, 1944, on the part of the I. N. A. was the greatest land mark in the history of Indian Independence Movement in the Far East. That day the declaration of war against the British and their allies by the Azad Hind Government was actually implemented. This offensive on the part of the I. N. A. was a clarion call to the 400 millions of India from Indians of the Far East as a whole. It was a letter in the name of every Indian without any distinction of caste, colour and creed. Every member of the I. N. A. and every member of the Indian Independence League wanted a response from their countrymen in some form or the other to give them the satisfaction that at long last, their countrymen were in the know, that some Units of India's Army of Liberation had penetrated into the Arakans after routing the Allies from many a sector. Alas, this response was not to be had ; even then the brave warriors of the I. N. A. continued battling against heavy odds.

The main Units which participated in the

Arakan campaign were the Babadur Group, Intelligence Group and other Units.

### **Entry into India and Bloody Battle of Imphal**

Meanwhile Netaji, who was by this time already in Rangoon, established an Advance Headquarters of the Azad Hind Government and the Azad Hind Fauj at Maymyo (Northern Burma).

At the same time the Units of Division No. 1, consisting of General Shah Nawaz's Bose Brigade, Col. I. Kiani's Gandhi Brigade, Col. Gulzara Singh's Azad Brigade, Col. Dhillon's Nehru Brigade, Col. Malik's Intelligence Group and other Units had been proceeding towards the upper Chindwin River and the Indo-Burma border. Bose and Gandhi Brigades were the first to go into action. After capturing many British strongholds like Fort White, Kalawa, Tamu, Tiddim and other places, the Units of the I. N. A. entered India on the 18th of March, 1944, an official announcement of which was made on the 21st. A Special Order of the day and a Special Proclamation was issued by Netaji on this occasion.

After crossing the border, the columns of the Azad Hind warriors advanced like a steam roller. Palel, Morey, Sangrar, Bishanpur and many other localities in the Naga Hills came under the shadow of the majestically flying Tricolour. Then came the historic siege of the capital of Manipur State, Imphal—the citadel of the British Imperialism in Eastern India. The Units of the I. N. A. and specially those of Col. Malik's Intelligence Group by-passed Imphal and

captured Kohima. Other Units advanced towards Dimapur and Silchar. The total area which was liberated by the I. N. A. and where the National Tricolour kept flying for nearly 4 months was over 15,000 sq. miles. Netaji appointed Maj. Gen. A. C. Chatterji, as the Governor of the liberated areas.

Meanwhile the battle of Imphal was on. This was the real battle that was ever fought—for the Complete Independence of India. It can hardly be described with the help of pen, paper, and words. Indeed the warriors who fought these battles on the Indo-Burma border and in Eastern India, majority of whom actually died at the front, a few of whom returned back due to strategical reasons, can alone know what it actually meant to them to be there. Mother India will always be indebted to her sons who were fighting against heavy odds in places like Kohima, Palel, Bishanpur and Imphal.

The battle of Imphal will be considered by future historians as one of the bitterest in the history of this global war. Okinawa, Stalingrad and Imphal battles can be considered as the greatest battles of the 2nd World War. They can not be compared with one another for obvious reasons. It can only be said that these were the battles that proved to be the turning points in the history inasmuch as they decided the course of war and the destiny of the world.

Thus India's Army of Liberation has the honour of fighting one of the bitterest battles of this world, at the front of Imphal. The I. N. A. was fighting against the allied forces under so many

handicaps and odds. The only difference between the two forces was that the former forces were mercenary, were equipped with the best and up-to-date material of war-fare, with their supply lines intact to make for them food and medicines available right at the front line, where-as the other force was patriotic to the core, whose only ambition was to see their mother country free, who just wanted to win over the material with the help of their spirit. On this side there was death, disease, starvation, and all the conceivable and inconceivable difficulties. For some time, it seemed the spirit of the Indian National Army would win over the material resources of the British and their allies. For about two months Admiral Mount-batten's forces had to be supplied ~~their~~ <sup>by</sup> rations and other amenities from the aeroplanes. At one time the situation was so delicate and hopeless for the Allies that orders had been passed to evacuate the Imphal Sector. For six months the I. N. A. heroes with their allies held their own against forces that were superior to them in every way except in spirit.

### Heavy Rains and Treacherous Betrayal.

When the British and their allied forces were about to withdraw from the Imphal Sector, heavy rain fall started and came in the form of a blessing for the British. Orders for the withdrawal were cancelled and the Commanders were ordered not to withdraw but to mark time as the rains would help them.

Besides the setting in of rains, the I. N. A.

Units around Imphal had no air support with them. The Japanese air force was withdrawn and sent to the South West Pacific, where they were forced to face superior American sea and air forces. On the other hand lines of communications were not only poor but unsafe. On several occasions the Japanese could not provide conveyances to carry food or war materials for the I. N. A. warriors fighting in Eastern India, because the Japanese did not have any such conveyances with them even for themselves.

At the same time one or two staff officers of the I. N. A. Units in stage betrayed their country their leader and their cause and went over to the British side. They were Major Prabhu Dayal and Maj. Grewal, belonging to the Bose and Gandhi Brigades. These traitors swallowing the oath of Allegiance they had taken before joining the I. N. A. crossed over to the British lines and informed the Britishers that the I. N. A. was poorly equipped and lacked in supplies.

But such officers were only a few. The I. N. A. had gems, like Maj. General Shah Nawaz Khan, Col. Shaukat Ali Malik, Col. G. S. Dhillon, Col. Gulzara Singh and others, at the same front. Their efficient leadership and their undaunted courage kept the I. N. A. men fighting marvellously.

Thus the treacherous rains, the lack of food and war materials, and the betrayal of the two traitors, were responsible to give a new turn to this battle of Imphal. The I. N. A. soldiers ever then kept up their spirits and from July 1944 to August 1944, inflicted upon the

allies many a defeat at many sectors. It was all along spirit winning over material. The I. N. A. could fight against material, but how could they fight against nature. Heavy down pour of rains, death valleys of Kelawa, Moreh etc. the scourge of Malaria and dysentery, difficulties of transport and communications and last but not the least acute shortage of food supplies were the lot of the remnant of the warriors of India's fight for freedom.

Even under these conditions heroes of the Azad Hind Fauj fought and wanted to fight further. They would not withdraw as Netaji had taught them only to march forward and know no withdrawal. But Netaji realized the tremendous difficulties and odds, and as such, wanted his forces to withdraw for tactical reasons.

### **The I. N. A. Withdraws**

Thus with great reluctance, the units of I. N. A. forces began to come back after August 1944. They had to face untold sufferings on their way back. Malaria, Dysentery, wounds, over-flowing, rivers and streams especially the Chindwin took a heavy toll of their lives.

At long last those who were fortunate enough to survive reached Mandalay, Maymyo and ~~such~~ <sup>other</sup> places and had their respite after a long and bitter battle. The I. N. A. Hospitals at Mandalay, Maymyo, and Rangoon were full of patients who suffered a lot both at the actual front and while withdrawing.

Although the warriors of the Azad Hind Fauj had retreated but a fact of vital importance was



brought to light. That was, that in the first conflict between the free Indian soldiers and the British troops, the Indian freedom fighters gave a remarkably good account of themselves, and proved that given an opportunity they could defeat and drive the British out of India.

### Two Fronts

In the meanwhile Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose opened two fronts—Actual front and Home front—in order to sound the death-knell of the British Imperialism. He divided the work of India's final emancipation from the shackles of British Imperialism into two categories.

Indian National Army officers and men would go to the actual front and sacrifice their lives for the cause of India's freedom by actually fighting, whereas the general Indian public of East Asia would form the home front, that would provide men, money and materials to the actual front people that is the I. N. A.

The slogans for the Actual Front were "On To Delhi" (Chalo Delhi) and shed your blood for mother India's Independence, Blood, Blood, and Blood (Khun, Khun Aur Khun). The slogans for the home front were "Total Mobilisation (Kuliya Bharti) and "Give your all, and Give Your All (Karo Sab Nichhawar aur bano sab faqir, Netaji clearly asked the people to sincerely choose between the two fronts and work accordingly.

Explaining further the work of the "Home Front" people, Netaji clearly stated that so far as men, material (other than the fighting

weapons, arms, ammunitions etc.) and money were concerned, the three millions of Indians inhabiting the whole of East Asia would have to shoulder the tremendous responsibility by mobilising whatever they had in men, money and material. He would not approach any foreign power for these things. he said, and appealed earnestly to every one, who called himself an Indian to contribute his mite for India's liberation. He further reminded his countrymen that only after their total mobilisation, if there was any shortage of men, money and material, would he tap foreign source. Not before that.

The response was, as already mentioned, more than expected.

### War Council

After the withdrawal from Imphal, Netaji, appointed a War Council, which was the supreme body of the Azad Hind Government. It consisted of :—

1. H. E. Netaji, Subhas Chandra Bose.
2. Maj. Gen. J. K. Bhonsle.
3. Maj. Gen. M Z Kiani.
4. Col. Ehsan Qadir.
5. Col. Aziz Ahmed Khan.
6. Col. Habibul-Rahman.
7. Col. Gulzara Singh.
8. Sri N. Raghavan.
9. Sri S. A. Ayer.
10. Sri Parmanand.
11. Maj. Gen. A. C. Chatterji—Secretary.
12. Sri A. Yelloppa—Co-opted Member.

Soon after that, that is, on 26th October, 1944, Netaji, accompanied by Major General Chatterji, Col. Habib-ur-Rahman and others left for Tokyo, and appointed Col. Ehsan Qadir as the Acting Secretary to the War Council.

### Decorations

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose as Supreme Commander of the Azad Hind Fauj, after consultations with his Generals and Army Commanders created many decorations to be accorded to the officers and men of the I. N. A. for gallantry, leadership, courage, loyalty to the cause, etc., exhibited while in action. A total of seven decorations were created, which were as follows :—

1. Tamgha-e-Shaheed-e-Bharat.
2. Tamgha-e-Sher-e-Hind.
3. Tamgha-e-Sardar-e-Jang 1st class.
4. Tamgha-e-Sardar-e-Jang. 2nd class.
5. Tamgha-e-Vir-e-Hind.
6. Tamgha-e-Bahaduri.
- 6a. Tamgha-e-Shatru Nash 1st class.
- 6b. Tamgha-e-Shatru Nash 2nd class.
7. Sanad-e-Bahaduri.

A total of 56 decorations are known to have been accorded by Netaji.

Lt. Kundan Singh, Hav. Ranjit Singh, Naik Mohlar Singh and Capt. Amrik Singh, received the decoration of Shaheed-e-Bharat. Col. P. S. Ratmi, Col. S. A. Malik, Lt. Col. Pritam Singh, Lt. Col. L. S. Misra, Maj. Suraj Mal, Maj. Maher Das, Capt. Mansukh Lal, Capt. Sikandar

Khan, Lt. Ajaib Singh, and Lt. Lebur Singh received Tamgha-e-Sardar-Janaz. Lt. Hari Singh and Naik Kehar Singh received Sher-e-Hind. Lt. Lal Singh, Lt. Kapoor Singh, Lt. Piara Singh and Lt. Asharfi Mandal received Tamgha-e-Vir e-Hind. Capt. Sadhu Singh, Lt. Roshan Lal, Lt. Dilman Singh, Hav. Ramulu Naidu, Hav. Din Dayal, Hav. Ahmed Din, s/o Ude Ram, Hav. Ram Singh, Hav. Gurmukh Singh, Hav. Din Mohd., Hav. Hakim Ali, Naik Sultan Singh, Naik Tara Singh, Naik Diwan Singh, Naik Fauja Singh, and Sepoy Bhim Singh received the Tamgha-e-Bahaduri, Lt. Pratab Singh, Lt. Lal Singh, Lt. Kapoor Singh, s/o Gurbachan Singh, Hav. Din Dyal, Hav. Nasib Singh, Hav. Pia Mohd., Hav. Hakim Ali, Naik Faiz Mohd., Naik Roshan Lal and Sepoy Ghulam Rasul received Tamgha-e-Shatru Nash, Lt. Durga Bahadur, s/o Jagir Singh, Hav. Ahmad-ud-Din, Hav. Anin Chaudhari, Hav. Mohd. Asghar, Hav. Durga Biri, Hav. Mohan Singh, Hav. Jagat Singh, Naik Indar Singh, Sep. Uttam Singh, Naik S. G. Sen and Sepoy Diwan Singh received Sanad-e-Bahaduri.

These decorations were accorded to these officers and men of the Army of India's Liberation in recognition of their services of gallantry, sacrifice, loyalty to the cause, leadership etc., rendered by them at the various fronts on the Indo-Burma border and inside Eastern India. These soldiers fought and exhibited their bravery, etc., on the Arakans, Haka, Falam, Tiddim, Kalewa, Lamu, Palel, Moreh, Kohima, Imphal, Bishanpur and so on.

## Netaji Again Prepares his Army for Final Assault

The withdrawal of the I. N. A. forces from Imphal and other parts of Eastern India did not at all disappoint Netaji. He said that the withdrawal was temporary. His optimism did not suffer at all. He personally visited all the I. N. A. hospitals and encouraged the patients in every way.

Netaji now started preparing his Army for another assault against the British Imperialism. Indians throughout East Asia continued to rally under the leadership of their Netaji and did not budge even an inch from the stand they had taken in the beginning. They continued to contribute lavishly towards the funds of their Government and the stream of supplies from other parts of East Asia to the I. N. A. in Burma continued to flow as usual, the ravage and continued Allied air bombardments notwithstanding.

Meanwhile Netaji toured throughout East Asia, at the end of 1944. He talked to his people, he addressed them, he exhorted them, and he brought them home the naked facts. He dwelt upon the lessons of the Battle of Imphal and explained in detail the reasons of the withdrawal. He also warned his compatriots again and again that the battle to be fought on the Indo-Burma borders would be the bitterest and as such, they should not expect a cheap victory. He said the line connecting Bishanpur, Imphal and Kohima, etc. could very well be compared to the much publicized Magnet line.

He held this line would have to be broken and smashed first and only then could the I. N. A. march forward without any let or hiderance.

By the month of September 1944, fresh I. N. A. troops had arrived from Singapore, Malaya and Thailand. While the remnants of the Division No 1 were either in hospitals or taking rest, the Division No. 2 was reorganised. It was first put under the Command of Colonel N. S. Bhagat, then under Colonel Aziz Ahmed and later under the Command of Maj. General Shah Nawaz Khan. It consisted of three Brigades and Auxiliary Units. They were 4th Guerilla Regiment (Nebru Brigade) under Col G. S. Dhillon, 5th Guerilla Regiment (later renamed as 2nd Infantry Regiment) under Col Prem Kumar Sehgal, and First Infantry Regiment under Col. S. M. Hussain. Other units were likewise reorganised.

### The Second Offensive

While on one side Netaji was preparing his army for a fresh assault against the British Imperialism, on the other hand, the British and their allied forces were with the aid of their overwhelming superiority in numbers and equipments advancing towards the Irrawady and towards Mandalay and Central Burma. The newly organised forces of the 2nd Division of the I. N. A. were also now fully equipped to march to the front and to capture the posts that had been evacuated by their comrades of the Division No. 1. due to strategic reasons. By the time the Division No. 2 was ordered to go on the

offensive, the majority of the men, who had already been to the front and had amassed a world of experience there, had also had their full rest and began to join in the offensive. Once again there were the same jubilation the same scenes of enthusiasm, and again the spirit was winning over the material. During this campaign the Civilian recruits from East Asia and the young officers trained in the officers Training School in Shonan and Rangoon distinguished themselves in bravery, leadership, loyalty to the cause, and sacrifice. People forget that the I. N. A. had ever retreated from Imphal.

The units of the I. N. A. were posted at Meikbla Prome, Popa Hills, Lower Chindwin, Ziawadi and other places. On not a single front did the I. N. A. suffer even a single defeat. The bloodiest battle was of course fought at Meiktila and Popa Hills. The town and airfields of Meiktila changed hands at least ten times.

It was during this campaign also that there were cases of treachery on the part of some of the I. N. A. staff officers, the worst being those of Major Madan, Major Riaz, Major Ghulam Sarwar and Major Dey. These were the staff officers of the Division No. 2, and they deserted the I. N. A., and went over to the enemy side. But treachery on the part of such officers, though a blow, did not count much, in the light of the fact that the I. N. A. had heroes and stars in its leaders like Maj.-Gen. Shah Nawaz Khan, Col. P. K. Sahgal, Col. Dhillon, Col. Arshad, Col. Hussain, Major Mehar Das and others.

In spite of the treachery on the part of some

of the I. N. A. officers, the I. N. A. troops held their positions and foiled two attempts of the British to cross the Irrawady. In the end, ~~it~~ was the Japanese sector ~~which~~ gave way. The Azad Hind Fauj troops did not suffer any defeat at the British hands. They knew no defeat.

Besides, the Azad Hind Fauj had no air support, while, on the other hand, the British and their allied troops were supported by formations of American planes. To the Azad Hind soldiers that did not matter at all. They fought against heavy odds and died with "Azad Hind Zindabad" and "Netaji Zindabad" on their lips.

### **The Rangoon Retreat**

Mandalay, Thazi, Meiktila and other near by places fell in March, 1945. The I. N. A. troops, however, continued fighting at Prome, Kalaw, Tongoo, Mawchi and other sectors. The Japanese were also fighting a losing battle, not because they were inferior to their enemies but because the British and their allies had superiority in numbers and equipments. The main thing that the Japanese lacked was the air power. The Japanese therefore decided to evacuate their forces from Burma and its capital Rangoon.

At that time, Netaji was in Rangoon. The Japanese Commander accompanied by his staff, and the Burmese Government of Dr. Ba Maw left Rangoon on the 23rd of April, 1945 according to plans. Netaji was still there. He was not prepared to leave, but he could not have his way, as he was pressed by his Minister and Generals to leave. He, therefore, decided to leave a strong



body of the I. N. A., in Rangoon so as to protect the lives and property of the Indians there, and not to allow the horrible occurrences of 1942. when the British evacuated Rangoon, repeat themselves. Hence a force of 6,000 I. N. A. men were left behind there. Maj. General A. D. Lognadan was appointed General Officer Commanding the I. N. A. forces in Burma, Col. R. M. Arshad was appointed his Chief of Staff and Officer Commanding Rangoon area, and Col. Mabbob Ahmed, the Military Secretary was asked to continue his services.

The Indian Independence League was left in the charge of Sri J. N. Bahadur, as the Vice President.

On 24th of April, Netaji and his party left Rangoon for Bangkok. Before he left, he assured himself of the safe evacuation of the members of Rani of Jhansi Regiment. He was the last to leave. Before leaving Rangoon, Netaji issued a Special Order of the Day to his troops, left in Burma (Appendix 6).

In Rangoon, 6,000 Officers and men of the I. N. A., during the intermittent period between the Rangoon evacuation and the British reoccupation, preserved law and order, much to the relief of all the sections of the population—Indian, Burmese, Chinese—as well as the Allied prisoners of war. This considerable body of the I. N. A. had every chance of moving to Moulmein. But they chose to stay as they felt they had a duty to discharge by their Indian compatriots. They were posted there only to protect the Indian community and other civilians. It must be





*Netaji along with General M. Z. Kiani and  
Sri N. Raghavan, seen on 5th July, 1945,  
in the Cathay Theatre,  
Singapore.*

borne in mind in this connection that they were well equipped and capable of resistances. When the 15th British Indian Corps landed in Rangoon, the I. N. A. held such positions in the city that they could have inflicted considerable damage and killed hundreds of Allied soldiers who had to come up the heavily mined Rangoon river in order to take the city. But the I. N. A. chose not to fight, for, they knew it was of no use.

When Netaji left Rangoon he was accompanied by the Ministers and Advisors of his Government and a handful of the I. N. A. men including his body guard battalion. On his way Netaji had to undergo many a hardship and cover many dangerous and risky paths. It was during this retreat that one of the ablest officers of the I. N. A. Col. L. S. Misra, Hero of the Arakan, and wearer of the decoration of "Sardar-e-Jang", First Class, died while crossing the Sittang River. Col. Misra was covering the retreat, and his boat, the last one to cross right across the river. Col. Misra was ambushed by British guerillas and was as a result killed in action. It was a great loss.

For full eighteen days Netaji and his party travelled on foot, by truck, bullock carts and such-like conveyances. The ever-hovering American planes above, the harpassing B. D. A. around, lack of food materials and malaria, dysentery and such like diseases were the lot of the party. It is worth mentioning that two members of the retreating Rani of Jhansi Regiment became victims of the machine gun bullets of the British planes. Netaji arrived in Bangkok on 13th of May, 1945.

## CHAPTER XI

### Netaji and Achievements of Azad Hind

When after the strenuous walks along with his soldiers Netaji arrived in Bangkok on the 13th May of 1945, I had the honour of being received by him on the same day of his arrival. I saw in him determination stronger than before, a stiffer stubbornness and a stronger will. He was however smiling as usual. Apparently there was no change. I told Netaji that the people wanted his darshan. He smiled, and said, "Not to-day. But give them my message—'India fights on. The road to Delhi is the road to Freedom. But there are many roads to Delhi'."

It was a unique message to Indians in East Asia. They knew that their Netaji was always optimistic. They knew that he understood the country and the struggle for freedom being carried on within the country. They knew that he had been twice Rashtrapati of their country. He was to them the embodiment of their motherland and their Congress. They knew that he was out to carry out the "Quit India" determination of the country to a success. They loved him. They adored him. Whether it was an I. N. A. Victory Day, whether it was the Azad Hind Government Day—which used to be celebrated on the 21st of every month—or whether it was a meeting after the "Rangoon Retreat", they flocked in thousands to greet their Netaji and

listen to his message. On all these occasions, they saw in him nothing but a determination to win, a will to do or die, and a stubbornness to carry on the struggle to its bitter end. To them, as to all Indians Netaji was a guiding star, a source of inspiration and a ray of hope. It was he who made the lakhs of Indians residing in East Asia contribute their all and join the ranks of the valiant warriors of the Azad Hind Fauj and the Azad Hind Sangh. "Total Mobilisation" and "Give me blood and I shall give you freedom" were the clarion calls of Netaji. As a result, the businessmen gave their money, the gwalas offered their cows, the watchmen and labourers contributed their savings to the funds of Azad Hind.

Men and women, who offered their services as soldiers in India's Army of Liberation, were in return promised by Netaji nothing but hunger, privations, sufferings and death. No sufficient ration, no sufficient clothes, and not even sufficient arms and ammunition could be supplied to these gallant fighters for India's freedom. The only thing Netaji gave them was a new spirit, a new consciousness, a new courage and a new determination to do or die, for the cause of 400 millions of their oppressed and suppressed compatriots.

In short, the awakening and the change brought into the being of the Indian residents of East Asia is unparalleled in the history of the world. Those people, Indian labourers, watchmen and business-men who were always humiliated in those countries, achieved a status

of an independent people because of the freedom movement. They held their heads high. They won and commanded respect and honour which they never had. And now after the reoccupation of those territories by the British and their allies, they feel proud of what they did during the war. They are proud of being Indians. Even a rubber estate labourer has undergone a unique change. To-day he has the courage to look the Englishman in his face, a portrait, which was alien in pre-war days. To-day he is not afraid of death. To-day Indians in East Asia feel that they also contributed their share in taking the country nearer to the goal of freedom.

The awakening among the Indian women of East Asia is another important aspect of the new life brought about by Azad Hind.

### **Awakening within India**

Although the Azad Hind movement could not achieve its immediate object of Indian Independence, yet the movement on the whole has not been a failure. The impetus given to the freedom movement within India, the new awakening brought into the masses and a new consciousness created as a result of the Azad Hind Movement has been unique. Especially the extent to which the Azad Hind Movement has affected and impressed the rank and file of the British Indian Army and other services has had no parallel. And all this was foretold by Netaji long before the Japanese surrender. In the course of his address (Appendix 7) at a mass meeting of Indians in Thailand held in Bangkok

on the 21st of May, 1945, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose declared, "When the true picture, of our dynamic movement comes before the eyes of our countrymen at home, the whole of India will be behind us like a solid rock." And to day we have seen that whatever was foretold by Netaji has come true.

It was during the same address that Netaji said, "No doubt, we have lost one round in India's war of Independence. But many more rounds are to follow... .. (And the most important of them will be) when after coming into Burma, the British Indian Army will be opened. They will see for themselves what the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and the Azad Hind Fauj have done and how they have fought for India's freedom. They will hear "Jai Hind" the greetings of all free Indians, and "Chalo Delhi", the battle cry, around them. They will also hear India's inspiring national anthem sung by freedom-loving Indians in Burma. The effect of this experience on the British Indian Army, and on all other Indians who have come into Burma along with the British, is bound to be great in the days to come" —Netaji knew that as soon as the dark screen of censorship is removed, and the people in the country came to know about the realities of the freedom movement in East Asia, they will lose no time in taking up and defending the cause of the movement.

And so it has happened, and much more is expected.



## Netaji Week and the I. N. A. Memorial

On 28th of May, 1945, Netaji, accompanied by his staff, left Bangkok (Siam) for Malaya. Those were the days when in India, the Government of India had released all the national Leaders interned since August, 1942, and the preparations for the 1945 Simla Conference were well on their way. Netaji's attitude towards the Simla Conference was as usual uncompromising. He issued many statements defining his attitude. Some communiques defining the policy of the Azad Hind Government were also issued by him in his capacity as the Head of the State of Azad Hind. In order to express his as well as his Government's opinion and to influence his countrymen within India, he intended to personally broadcast these statements over radio. But the Azad Hind Radio at Bangkok was in those days out of order, as a result of the Allied bombardment of the Bangkok Power house. Hence Netaji's decision to go to Shonan (Singapore).

Soon after his arrival in Malaya, approached the Netaji Week—a celebration to commemorate the taking over of the leadership of the Indian Independence Movement in East Asia by Netaji. This week was celebrated by Indians throughout East Asia in many ways. Rallies and military parades were held; sports, both military and civil were performed; pledges were taken by Indians irrespective of caste and creed, to continue the fight for India's freedom till complete freedom was achieved; dramas by the girls of the Rani of Jhansi Regiment were displayed, and the drama

which was displayed at Shonan, was graced by the presence of Netaji and his Ministers; and so on. Similar scenes were witnessed at Bangkok and other centres in East Asia, which were still out of bounds to the British and their allies.

At the end of July, 1945, Netaji and his Cabinet decided to erect an I. N. A. Memorial at Shonan, dedicated to those brave and valiant fighters of Azad Hind, who laid down their lives while fighting and battling for the cause of Mother India, in Eastern Asia, on the Indo-Burma border and in Burma and elsewhere. This decision was arrived at by the Azad Hind Cabinet at the suggestion of Netaji himself. It was a brilliant idea.

Soon after, the work started to materialize the decision of the Azad Hind Government. In the beginning of August, H. E. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose laid the foundation stone of the Memorial on the Shonan Foreshore, an excellent site.

The work for building the historic I. N. A. Memorial had just commenced when the rumours of the Japanese surrender started pouring in. And when the Japanese actually surrendered on the 11th of August, the I. N. A. Memorial was only partly completed.

Later, on the 16th of August, when Netaji left Singapore for Bangkok, he entrusted the work of the completion of the Memorial to Colonel, C. J. Stracey, Netaji ordered his young Colonel, under all circumstances, to complete the work before the British arrived there.

In complete obedience to his Supreme Commander and Leader, Col. Stracey rushed forward with that task, and completed the work overnight—literally overnight. It turned out to be one of the most magnificent architectures. With National Tri-colour fluttering majestically above, the Memorial bore the three guiding principles of the Movement “Ittehad, Itmad and Kurbani”

### **The I. N. A. Memorial Blown Up By The British**

When the British authorities and their troops arrived there in Singapore, they were wonder-struck to see that majestic structure, which silently bore testimony to the heroic fight which the Free India soldiers had carried on against heavy odds for the sacred and just cause. But the Memorial was a beam in the eyes of the Imperialist British. The power, which had gone into their head, drove them mad, and discarding all international and human laws, these so-called champions of democracy and freedom passed immediate orders to blast away the I. N. A. Memorial. The tragic part, of course, is that the task of demolishing the Memorial was given to an Indian Regiment. Hence soon after the British re-occupation of Malaya, the I. N. A. Memorial was dynamited. That inhuman act on the part of the British was strongly resented by Indians not only in Malaya but throughout the world. The Chinese and the Malayas as well expressed their resentment over that ghastly act of the British occupation authorities.





***At the I. N. A. Memorial—A Balak-Sena-boy  
after Netaji's reported death.***

It is now reported that one slab, on which is engraved the name of Netaji was stealthily taken away by some Indians, and was presented to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, during his recent visit to Malaya. It is now with Panditji.

### **Communal Unity And Non-Untouchability In The I. N. A.**

The Azad Hind Movement in East Asia solved many problems. And one of them was the major and intricate problem of communal unity. Although efforts ~~towards~~ this direction were made ever since the inception of the movement in 1942, yet it became a reality only after the arrival of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. There was another question and that was of untouchability—though on a minor scale. In East Asia, the question of untouchability did not confront us so much as it did or does in India. Anyhow, this ill too was remedied as a result of universal training of Indians in the I. N. A. camps and I. I. L. offices after Netaji's arrival.

What were the ways and means adopted to achieve these objects may be a long story. But the achievement can be attributed to three main factors. Firstly, absence of the third power; secondly Netaji's direct approach to the problems; and thirdly, Netaji's apparent ignoring of the problems.

Now, what the people may be interested in, is how this achievement of communal unity and eradication of untouchability was evident. For that, I may pen the following covering both

the combatant and non-combatant sections of the militant organisation of Azad Hind.

With the elimination of the British power from East Asia, the communal differences among Indians also started fading away. The first scene of the communal harmony was observed in Bangkok in June 1942, when about 120 Indian representatives of the Indian community in East Asia gathered there for a Conference. There were among them Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and others. They stayed together, ate together and resolved together to organise the Indian community into one body and under one banner.

Then came February, 1943, and Gandhiji's historic fast. Throughout East Asia, rallies were held where all Indians belonging to different religions and of different castes and creeds gathered and demanded release of the Mahatma. Prayers were held in temples, mosques, gurdwaras and churches for the long life of Gandhiji. That presented an admirable and thrilling scene of communal unity.

Then came the advent of Netaji, and along with that a revolutionary change in the society and in the organisation. Netaji had asked for the "Total Mobilisation" for the coming armed struggle for India's freedom. To this call of Netaji, the response was universal—from all sections of the community—from Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and others. They offered their services as combatant and non-combatant volunteers.

As already described, some of these volunteers

were absorbed in the Azad Hind Sangh, the party behind the Azad Hind Fauj and the Azad Hind Government. Others—Majority of the volunteers—joined the ranks of the Fauj. The Sangh had a network of branches throughout East Asia. In every branch, workers, consisting of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians, worked together. Wherever there were large numbers of workers, as was the case in places like Bangkok, Singapore, Rangoon, Saigon, Hongkong, they used to live in messes. The messes were joint messes. There was no separate Hindu mess, Muslim mess, Sikh mess or a Christian mess. There used to be one kitchen for all members of all religions. Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, and Christians lived together, ate at the same table, and worked together.

The same was the case in the I. N. A. Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, etc., used to live in the same barracks. There were Brahmans, as well as Harijans, there were Maulvis as well as Ahirs; there were caste-Hindus as well as the so-called untouchables, in the same barracks. There were no separate lungars. Meals were prepared in the same kitchen for all. All the soldiers irrespective of religion, caste and creed used to eat at the same tables. There was no discrimination of food. Same rations used to be supplied to all the soldiers. Beef as well as pork were however prohibited in the messes of the Azad Hind Sangh and the Azad Hind Fauj.

One would be surprised and pleased as well, to see the fanatic Brahmins of Madras, U. P., C. P. and Bihar, the Maulvis with fine beards, and



the untouchables from all parts of India living together, sitting together and eating at the same tables. Those people who even in foreign lands never touched meals unless prepared by themselves, could be seen enjoying the common food along with their countrymen representing all the sections and all the castes and all the religions.

### **Uniformity Of Dress And Language.**

Another revolutionary change brought about by the Azad Hind Movement under Netaji was the uniformity of standards. Netaji took personal interest in such things which most indubitably help in solving many intricate problems, existing among Indians. A Special Cabinet Sub-Committee had been set up for the purpose. This Committee had been given the task of putting forth suggestions and recommendations for achieving the uniformity of all standards of life for the people of India.

The things which were already in practice there, were in no way less in importance. The dress of the Army is of course always a uniform one, but the dress for the civil population, and especially for the non-combatant (civilian) members of the Azad Hind Movement was also uniformed.

Still greater achievement was the common language. Every Indian resident in East Asia was asked to learn Hindustani, and classes on mass scale for general as well as adult education were opened to teach Hindustani. The controversial point of the script was very

successfully solved by adopting the Roman script. As our countrymen are in great majority illiterate, it is easier to popularise the Roman script. That is what we found there in East Asia. We saw that the people welcomed it. It was a great contribution towards the achievement of unity. Jai Hind.

## APPENDIX I.

### Enrolment form of civil volunteers for the Azad Hind Fauj (I. N. A.)

You are warned that if after enrolment it is found that you have given a false answer to any of the following questions, you will be punished in accordance with the law laid down by the I. I. L.

1. Name. (Block Letters).

2. Address.

- |                  |                        |
|------------------|------------------------|
| a. In India      | b. In East Asia.       |
| i. Village.      | i. Post Office.        |
| ii. Post Office. | ii. City or Town.      |
| iii. Thana.      | iii. District.         |
| iv. Tehsil.      | iv. Kampong or Estate. |
| v. District.     | v. Country.            |
| vi. Province.    |                        |

3. Age.

4. What are your qualifications.

- a. Educational.
- b. Linguistic.
- c. Technical.

5. Are you married or single ?

If married where is your family now? Number of children alive.

6. Have you ever been imprisoned by the civil power (what for).

7. How employed at present.

8. Have you ever served in the army? If so, for how long and in what capacity.

9. Are you willing to go and serve wherever the I. I. L. orders you, whether in the I. N. A. or in any other capacity.

I,.....solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true and that I am willing to sign the attached pledge.

## CERTIFICATE OF ROLLING OFFICER

I certify that the answers to the above questions were given and recorded by me (or in my presence) on the day of.....

Signature of Enrolling Officer.

Description of enrolment (see instructions below).

To be completed by R. O. or (Local Chairman or Secretary of the League)

|        |       |        |       |         |       |
|--------|-------|--------|-------|---------|-------|
| Age    | Years | Months | Chest | Minimum | Inch. |
| Height | Ft.   | Inch   | Meas. | Max.    | Inch. |

To be completed by Medical Officer.

I consider him                      for the Army, (Insert here 'fit' or 'unfit')

Identification marks.

Date

Place Medical Officer.

Note. (a) General health must be above average. Should have no disability which is likely to interfere with the Military duties.

(b) Men who have no family encumbrance here will be preferred

(c) Men who can read and write at least in their mother tongue would be preferred.

## APPENDIX 2.

The following is the pledge, which every recruit used to take :—

1. I hereby voluntarily and of my own free will join and enlist in the Azad Hind Fauj through the Indian Independence League.

2. I solemnly and sincerely dedicate myself to India and hereby pledge my life for her freedom.

I will serve India and the Indian independence Movement to my fullest capacity even at the risk of my life, under the leadership of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

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1. Name. (Block Letters).

2. Address.

a. In India

b. In East Asia.

i. Village.

i. Post Office.

ii. Post Office.

ii. City or Town.

iii. Thana.

iii. District.

iv. Tehsil.

iv. Kampong or Estate.

v. District.

v. Country.

vi. Province.

3. Age.

4. What are your qualifications.

a. Educational.

b. Linguistic.

c. Technical.

5. Are you married or single ?

If married where is your family now? Number of children alive.

6. Have you ever been imprisoned by the civil power (what for).

7. How employed at present.

8. Have you ever served in the army? If so, for how long and in what capacity.

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I,.....solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true and that I am willing to sign the attached pledge.

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|        |       |        |       |         |       |
|--------|-------|--------|-------|---------|-------|
| Age    | Years | Months | Chest | Minimum | Inch. |
| Height | Ft.   | Inch   | Meas. | Max.    | Inch. |

To be completed by Medical Officer.

I consider him for the Army, (Insert here 'fit' or 'unfit')

Identification marks.

Date

Place

Medical Officer.

Note. (a) General health must be above average. Should have no disability which is likely to interfere with the Military duties.

(b) Men who have no family encumbrance here will be preferred

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2. I solemnly and sincerely dedicate myself to India and hereby pledge my life for her freedom.

I will serve India and the Indian independence Movement to my fullest capacity even at the risk of my life, under the leadership of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

3. In serving the country I shall seek no personal advantage for myself.

4. I will regard all Indians as my brothers and sisters without distinction of religion, language and territory.

5. I will faithfully and without hesitation obey and carry out all orders and instructions given to me by the Indian Independence League and I will carry out all just and lawful commands of my superior officers under whom I may be required to serve from time to time.

Date :

Place :

Signature.

### APPENDIX 3.

The following is the proclamation on the formations of the Free India Government:—(21st October, 1913).

"After their first defeat at the hands of the British in 1757 in Bengal, the Indian people fought an uninterrupted series of hard and bitter battles over a stretch of one hundred years. The history of this period teems with examples of unparalleled heroism and self-sacrifice. And in the pages of that history, the names of Siraj Ud-doula and Mohanlal of Bengal, Haidar Ali, Tippu Sultan and Velu Thambi of South India, Appa Sahib Bhonsle and Peswha Baji Rao of Maharashtra, the Begums of Oudh, Sardar Shyam Singh Atariwala of the Punjab, and last but not the least, Rani Laxmibai of Jansi, Tantia Topi, Maharaj Kunwar Singh of Dumraon and Nana Sahib are for ever engraved in letters of gold. Unfortunately for us, our forefathers did not at first realise that the British constituted a grave threat to the whole of India, and they did not therefore put up a united front against the enemy. Ultimately, when the Indian people were roused to the reality of the situation, they made a concerted move and under the flag of Bahadur Shah in 1857 they fought their last war as freemen.

Forcibly disarmed by the British after 1857 and subjected to terror and brutality, the Indian people lay prostrate for a while, but with the birth of the Indian National Congress in 1885, there came a new awakening. From 1885 till the end of the last World War, the Indian people, in their endeavour, to recover their lost liberty, tried all possible methods namely, agitation and propaganda, boycott of British goods, terrorism and sabotage, and finally, armed revolution. But all these efforts failed for a time. Ultimately in 1920, when the Indian people, haunted by a sense of failure, were groping for a new method, Mahatma Gandhi came forward with the new weapon of non-co-operation and civil disobedience.....

Thus the Indian people not only recovered their political consciousness, but became a political entity once again. They could now speak with one voice and strive with one will for one common goal. From 1939, through the work of the Congress Ministries in eight provinces they gave proof of their capacity to administer their own affairs. Thus, on the eve of the present World War, the stage was set for the final struggle for India's liberation.....

Having goaded Indians to desperation by its hypocrisy, and having driven them to starvation and death by plunder and loot, British rule in India has forfeited the good-will of the Indian people altogether and is now living a precarious existence. It needs but a flame to destroy the last vestige of the unhappy rule. To light that flame is the task of India's Army of Liberation.

Now that the dawn of freedom is at hand, it is the duty of the Indian people to set up a Provisional Government of their own, and launch the last struggle under the banner of that Government. But with all the Indian leaders in prison and the people at home totally disarmed, it is not possible to set up a Provisional Government within India or to launch an armed struggle under the aegis of that Government. It is, therefore, the duty of the Indian Independence



League in East Asia, supported by all patriotic Indians at home and abroad, to undertake this task—the task of setting up a Provisional Government of Azad Hind (Free India), and of conducting the last fight for Freedom, with the help of the Azad Hind Fauj organised by the League.....

The Provisional Government is entitled to, and hereby claims, the allegiance of every Indian. It guarantees religious liberty as well as equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens. It declares its firm resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation equally and transcending all the differences cunningly fostered by an alien Government in the past.

In the name of God, in the name of bygone generations, who have welded the Indian people into one nation, and in the name of the dead heroes who have bequeathed to us a tradition of heroism and self-sacrifice—we call upon the Indian people to rally round our banner and to strike for India's freedom. We call upon them to launch the final struggle against the British and their allies in India and to prosecute that struggle with valour and perseverance and with full faith in final victory until the enemy is expelled from Indian soil and the Indian people are once again a Free Nation."

#### APPENDIX 4.

Loud and prolonged cheers echoed and re-echoed in the vast hall as Netaji took the oath of Allegiance to India. He was so moved that at one stage minutes passed but his voice could not triumph over the emotion which struggled in his throat. The emotion that suddenly welled up showed how deeply each word of the oath and the sanctity of the occasion had affected him. In a now loud, now soft, but always firm voice, he read out :—

"In the name of God, I take this sacred oath that to liberate India and the thirty-eight crores of my countrymen, I, Subhas Chandra Bose, will continue this Sacred War of Freedom till the last breath of my life.

I shall always remain a servant of India and look after the welfare of thirty-eight crores of Indian brothers and sisters. This shall be for me my highest duty.

Even after winning freedom, I will always be prepared to shed the last drop of my blood for the preservation of India's freedom."

#### APPENDIX 5.

Each member of the Provisional Government came up in front of the vast Conference and individually took the oath :—

"In the name of God, I.....take this holy oath that to liberate India and thirty-eight crores of my countrymen, I will be absolutely faithful to our leader-Subhas Chandra Bose and shall be always prepared to sacrifice my life and all I have for the cause."

#### APPENDIX 6.

##### Special Order of the Day.

Issued from an undisclosed base by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, Supreme Commander of Azad Hind Fauj, to the Officers and men of the Azad Hind Fauj.

"Brave Officers and men of the Azad Hind Fauj.

It is with a very heavy heart that I am leaving Burma—the scene of the many heroic battles that you have fought since February, 1944 and are still fighting. In Imphal and Burma we have lost the first round in our fight for Independence. But it is only the first round. We have many more rounds to fight. I am a born optimist and I shall not admit defeat under any circumstances. Your brave deeds in the battles against the enemy on the plains of Imphal, the hills and jungles of Arakan and the oil field area and other localities in Burma will live in history of our struggle for Independence for all times.

Comrades : At this critical hour, I have only one word of command to give you, and that is, that if you have to go down temporarily, then go down fighting with the National Tricolour held aloft ; go down as heroes : go down upholding the highest code

of honour and discipline. The future generations of Indians who will be born, not as slaves but as free men, because of your colossal sacrifice, will bless your names and proudly proclaim to the world that you, their forebears, fought and lost the battle in Manipur, Assam, and Burma, but through temporary failure you paved the way to ultimate success and glory.

My unshakable faith in India's liberation remains unaltered. I am leaving in your safe hands our National honour and the best traditions of Indian warriors. I have no doubt whatsoever that you, the vanguard of India's Army of Liberation, will sacrifice everything, even life itself, to uphold India's national honour, so that your comrades who will continue the fight elsewhere may have before them your shining example to inspire them at all times.

If I had my own way, I would have preferred to stay with you in adversity and share with you the sorrow of temporary defeat. But on the advice of my Ministers and High Ranking Officers, I have to leave Burma in order to continue the struggle for emancipation. Knowing my countrymen in East Asia and inside India, I can assure you that they will continue the fight under all circumstances and that all your sufferings and sacrifices will not be in vain. So far as I am concerned, I shall steadfastly adhere to the pledge that I took on the 21st of October, 1943, to do all in my power to serve the interests of 38 crores of my countrymen and fight for their liberation. I appeal to you, in conclusion, to cherish the same optimism as myself and to believe, like myself, that the darkest hour always precedes the dawn. India shall be free.....and before long.

May God Bless You.

INQUILAB ZINDABAD  
AZAD HIND ZINDABAD  
JAI HIND"

(Sd.) SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE.

An undisclosed base,  
25th April, 1945.

SUPREME COMMANDER  
AZAD HIND FAUJ.

## APPENDIX 7.

## All Roads Lead To Delhi.

The following is the substance in English of a speech delivered by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in Bangkok on 21st May, 1945, (PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT DAY). (Netaji's last speech in Bangkok)

"Sisters and Brothers.

After I spoke to you in January last, the war situation has undergone a considerable change. In Europe, German resistance has collapsed completely. Here, in Burma, we have lost the first round in our fight for freedom. Nevertheless, there is no reason why we should lose heart. If our enemies did not lose heart when they were expelled from Europe and East Asia, if our enemies, despite such staggering defeats, could continue the war and even launch a counter-offensive, we should exhibit at least as much strength and tenacity as our enemies have. You know that I have always said that we shall deserve to be free only if we are more courageous, more tenacious, and more far-sighted than our enemies. If our enemies, after being expelled from Burma, could stage a come-back, there is no reason why we should not return to Burma again. The main point is whether our morale has broken down and whether we consider ourselves to be beaten. The Supreme Commander of the Allied forces in the last European War, Marshal Foch, once made a historic remark—"That Army is beaten which considers itself to be beaten." Among those who have come with me from Burma, there is not one man or woman who considers himself or herself to be beaten. No doubt we have lost one round in India's War of Liberation. But many more rounds are to follow, and the last round will decide the final result of this war. War is in many ways like a match between two wrestlers. When the wrestlers are more or less equal in strength, victory will go to him who can hold out longer. If we have greater tenacity and staying power, if we have more spiritual strength than our enemies, then only shall we deserve to win freedom.

Unfortunately, there are among us a few men who get easily upset—and even panicky—over slight setbacks. This is the psychological effect of slavery. The Indian people will have to overcome this weakness and to carry on the fight under all circumstances if they are to win in the long run.

There is another thing I should like to tell you in this connection. In a modern war—and especially in a war of the present magnitude—many things may happen which are least expected or anticipated. A famous military strategist and one of the founders of the science of modern warfare, the German General and Writer, Clausewitz, once said—"War has many surprises." I shall give you a few instances to illustrate the truth of this remark. In the Balkan War of 1912, the four powers—Roumania, Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia—made a combined attack on Turkey. Turkey was defeated in one battle after another, until the Balkan powers almost reached the gates of Constantinople (Istanbul). Everything seemed to be lost for the Turks, and there was not even a glimmer of hope. All of a sudden, disagreement and discord broke out among the four Balkan powers which quickly developed into a war among themselves. Constantinople was saved. The Turkish forces launched a counter-offensive and they managed to recover most of the lost territories. We see, therefore, that if Turkey had surrendered when all hopes seemed to have gone, she would not have been able to turn the tide of the war as she actually did.

Take another example from the recent history of Turkey. In the last world war, Turkey fought alongside of Germany and Austria-Hungary. But she was ultimately beaten. Constantinople, the proud capital of the Ottoman Empire, was occupied by the Allied forces and the Sultan, who was also the Caliph, was virtually made a prisoner. Seeing that the war was completely lost, the Sultan submitted to all the humiliating treatment imposed by the Allied Forces and asked the Turks to cease all resistance. In that dark

hour, there was, however, one man who would not accept defeat, Mustapha Kemal Pasha, who was then only one of the many able Turkish Officers, left Constantinople and crossed over to Anatolia. He got together a band of faithful officers and with their help organised a new army from among the Anatolian Turks. That army proved to be invincible and the Turks, by their valour, tenacity and indomitable faith, recovered the freedom and victory that they had lost when they had such powerful allies as Germany, and Austria-Hungary. It is indeed one of the miracles of history that Turkey was badly beaten when she was fighting side by side with powerful allies and that when she put up a fight all alone, after her defeat, she came out victorious in the long run. The secret of this miracle was that Kemal Pasha and his fellow fighters did not accept defeat at a time when all the other Turks headed by the Sultan himself did so.

I shall now give you another instance from another part of the world, namely, Ireland. During the last World War, when Ireland's enemy, Britain, was engaged in a life and death struggle the Irish Revolutionaries made a bid for freedom true to their motto that "Britain's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity." They rose in revolt during the Easter Week of 1916. The Easter Rebellion was, however, crushed inside of a week. At that time, there were Irish people, who called their own revolutionaries 'mad men'. But though the Easter Rebellion was crushed so easily, the forces of revolution continued to work among the Irish people, and ultimately broke out in a more powerful revolution in 1919—that is, one year after the end of the war. It is a strange phenomenon in history that while the British could easily crush the Irish Rebellion of 1916 at a time when they were engaged in a life and death struggle, they had to acknowledge defeat at the hands of the same Irish Revolutionaries after they (the British) emerged victorious from the world war. If the Irish Revolution had accepted defeat in 1916, the Revolution of 1919 would not have taken place and

Ireland would not have been what she is today.

A similar phenomenon took place in India also. During the World War, the Indian revolutionaries tried to organise a rebellion in order to overthrow British power in India. That attempt was easily crushed. But the spirit of the Indian people did not acknowledge defeat. After Britain's victory in the last war, and after the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre in 1919, a political awakening of the Indian people under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi took place on such a grand scale that the British have not been able to suppress it upto now.

The lesson to be derived from all these events is, that a nation which loses its morale and its faith in ultimate victory can never hope to be victorious. On the other hand, if in spite of temporary setbacks and defeats, we continue the struggle with undiminished faith in our final success, then no power on earth can deprive us of our well-deserved victory. Since we are fighting for justice and truth and for the birthright of liberty, and, since we are prepared to pay the full price of that liberty, freedom is bound to come, if only we fight on.

There is no need to hide the fact that we have lost the first round in our war of liberation. But that does not mean that the fighting in Burma has come to an end. On the contrary, the Azad Hind Fauj and the Japanese Army are still fighting on various fronts in Burma and they will continue fighting so long as it is humanly possible to do so. Those of us who have left Burma have not withdrawn from the fight. We have come with the sole intention of continuing the struggle on other fronts. We are moving from one battlefield to another. We have but one goal before us the goal of complete independence, and only one method of achieving that goal—the method of armed struggle. Therefore, the reverses that we have suffered recently in Burma do not affect our future programme in any way. "CHALO DELHI" continues to be the slogan and the war-cry of the Azad Hind Fauj. It may be that we shall not go to

Delhi via Imphal. But the roads to Delhi are many, like the roads to Rome. And along one of these many roads we shall travel and ultimately reach our destination, the Metropolis of India.

In all our recent experiences, there is one thing which is to us tragic and humiliating. Whatever reverses we have suffered during a campaign of about fifteen months, have been due not so much to the British forces, as to the British Indian Army. In the spring of 1944 it was the British Indian Army that barred our way to Imphal, Calcutta and Delhi. This year, it has been the British Indian Army, more than anybody else, that has been responsible for the re-entry into Burma of the British. In the last century it was with the help of India that the British conquered Burma. Now it is again with the help of India that the British have re-entered Burma. There is, however, one silver lining in the cloud that has overtaken us and that is that the British Indian Army of today is not the British Indian Army of the last war. Soldiers of the Azad Hind Fauj have had numerous opportunities of coming into close contact with members of the British Indian Army. Very often our soldiers were told by the latter that if they (i. e. Azad Hind Fauj) succeed in advancing further, members of the British Indian Army would then come and join them. There is no doubt that at heart large sections of the British Indian Army sympathise with the Azad Hind Fauj and its fight for freedom. But the British Indian Army is not yet prepared to take the risk and line up with the revolutionaries. As a result of foreign rule, members of the British Indian Army have lost their self-confidence and they are afraid that the British might ultimately win, in which case they would be in a difficult situation. Moreover they have been influenced, to some extent, by the propaganda of our enemies that the Azad Hind Fauj (Indian National Army) is a puppet army of the Japanese. After coming into Burma, the eyes of the British Indian Army will be opened. They will see for themselves what the



Provisional Government of Azad Hind and the Azad Hind Fauj have done and how they have fought for India's freedom. They will, hear "Jai Hind" which is the greeting of all free Indians. They will also hear India's inspiring national anthem sung by freedom-loving Indians in Burma. The effect of this experience on the British Indian Army, and on all other Indians who have come into Burma alongside of the British, is bound to be great in the days to come. When the true picture of our dynamic movement comes before the eyes of our countrymen at home, the whole of India will be behind us like a solid rock.

Friends, I shall refer once again to the war in Europe. There was a time when the German Armies had advanced inside Russia right up to Stalingrad. I wonder how many people there were who, in those days, could imagine that the tide would turn and that one day the Soviet Army would be in Berlin. Germany's defeat is one of the surprises of this war. Clausewitz was perfectly right when he said that "War has many surprises". But there are more surprises to come and some of these surprises will not be welcome to our enemies. You know very well that I have been always of the opinion that if Germany collapsed, it would be a signal for the outbreak of an acute conflict between the Soviet and the Anglo-Americans. That conflict has already broken out and it will be intensified in the days to come. The time is not far off when our enemies will realise that though they have succeeded in overthrowing Germany, they have indirectly helped to bring into the arena of European politics another power—Soviet Russia—that may prove to be a greater menace to British and American Imperialisms than Germany was. The Provisional Government of Azad Hind, will continue to follow inter-national developments with the closest interest and endeavour to take the fullest advantage of them. The fundamental principle of our foreign policy has been and will be—Britain's enemy is India's friend.

It is clear by now that the war aims of the Soviet Union are quite different from those of the Anglo-Americans although they had a common enemy in Germany. This has been further confirmed at the San Francisco Conference where the Soviet Foreign Commissar, Mon. Molotov, refused to submit to the Anglo-American demands. In fact, Mon. Molotov, went so far as to challenge the credentials of the puppets of Britain and America who came to represent India and the Phillipines, respectively. The differences that became visible at the San Francisco Conference are only a precursor of a much wider and deeper conflict between the Soviet and the Anglo-Americans which the future has in store for the world.

While the conflict between the Soviet and the Anglo-Americans is going on, we should not fail to understand the real position and strength of our principal enemy, Britain. So long as Britain was fighting without the aid of America, whether in Europe or in East Asia, she was beaten in every battle. Britain's recent successes have been due first and foremost to American leadership and American assistance. I have said so again and again in the past, that the days of the British Empire are drawing to a close. The British Empire is a decadent and decaying empire, and it is endeavouring now to prolong its life with the help of the United States of America. But though the life of an old man may be prolonged with the help of skilful doctors and efficacious medicines and injections, it can never be restored to youthful vitality. The British empire is endeavouring to march on with the help of American crutches, but these American crutches cannot help Britain very long. All that we have to do is to deliver a knockout blow to British Imperialism in India, which is the basis of Britain's world imperialism.

Our programme in East Asia remains unaltered. I demand from my countrymen in East Asia "Total Mobilisation." We want more men, more money and more materials to replenish the losses we have









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